

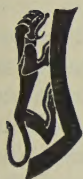
Life of the Spirit

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‘PROVIDA MATER ECCLESIA’



JUST two years ago His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, issued the Apostolic Constitution which established canonically those groups of laity who had banded themselves together for the same purposes as those in religious Orders but without the external structure of religious life. This recognition of Lay or, as they are more commonly known, Secular Institutes is of considerable importance both for these groups of laity themselves and for the whole Church in keeping her contem-

porary, abreast of the times and adapting her apostolic mission to the changing conditions of modern life. Readers of LIFE OF THE SPIRIT have shown great interest in this document on this account and have in particular wanted to know the principles upon which this new form of dedicated life rests. Many have evidently hoped that these principles would enable the whole gamut of religious life, both contemplative and active, to be reproduced under essentially lay conditions. But, as several contributions in the last few months have shown, there has been considerable confusion as to the wording and precisions of the Constitution. We have therefore determined to give readers the opportunity of reading the whole document in English. For absolute accuracy they must turn to the Latin itself which is hard to render into readable and precise English. But the following translation will help to settle many points. In particular the document declares that Secular Institutes in their new canonical form are those only which seek ‘to attain Christian perfection and the full exercise of the Apostolate’ and that these come under the Congregation of Religious while all other associations of the Laity come under another congregation. Nevertheless, in view of the Church’s teaching on the apostolate as growing out of contemplation, it would not seem to be a great step to extend these new privileges to purely contemplative groups, particularly as the vow of chastity and the vow of obedience seem to be integral to the structure of a Secular Institute. However, at present the whole purpose of this new form of the life of perfection is evidently to particularise in one instance the great movement of Catholic Action which was set on foot in the last Pontificate. It is intended to form apostles who will live in the world.

THE EDITOR.

THE TEXT

THE APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTION CONCERNING CANONICAL STATES AND LAY INSTITUTES DIRECTED TO THE ATTAINMENT OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

PIUS, BISHOP, SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD: BE IT KNOWN AND PERPETUALLY HELD IN REMEMBRANCE.



WITH signal diligence and maternal affection our far-seeing Mother the Church has striven continually to make worthy of their godly purpose and supernatural vocation¹ those favoured sons of her choice, who consecrate the whole of their lives to Christ our Lord,² and follow him freely and resolutely in the way of the counsels. How wisely she has always regulated their system of life, the repeated teaching and admonitions of Popes, Councils and Fathers bear witness, and is splendidly proved by the unbroken course of the Church's history, as well as the whole tenor of canonical discipline up to the present time.

Undeniably from earliest Christian times onwards the Church has busied herself with elucidating by her authoritative teaching the doctrine of Christ and the Apostles, paramount and inspiring examples of perfection.³ With assurance she has taught by what system a life dedicated to perfection was to be led and duly regulated. So earnestly in her work and ministry did she spread and encourage wholehearted dedication and consecration to Christ, that the early Christians preferred spontaneously to live by the evangelical counsels, and thus became good soil ready for sowing and sure to yield abundant harvests.⁴ Within a short time, as can be easily proved from the Apostolic Fathers and more ancient ecclesiastical writers,⁵ so widespread and flourishing was the ideal of perfection adopted, that those

1 Cf. Pius XI, Radio message '*Ad Religiosos*', 12.ii.1931. *Acta Ap: Sed:* 1931, p. 67.

2 Cf. Tertullian, *Ad Uxorem* 1, 4. P.L. 1, 1281; Ambrose, *De Virginibus*, 3, 11. P.L. 16, 202; Eucherius of Lyons, *Exhort ad Monachos* 1. P.L. 50, 865; Bernard, *Ep.* 449. P.L. 182, 641, and *Apologia ad Guillelmum*, 10. P.L. 182, 912.

3 *Mt.* 16, 24; 19, 10-2, 16-21; *Mk* 10, 17-21, 23-30; *Lk* 18, 18-22, 24-9; 20, 34-6. 1 *Cor.* 7, 25-35, 37-8, 40; *Mt.* 19, 27; *Mk* 10, 28; *Lk* 18, 28; *Acts* 21, 8-9; *Apoc.* 14, 4-5.

4 *Lk* 8, 15; *Acts* 4, 32-5; 1 *Cor.* 7. Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 3, 39. P.G. 20, 297.

5 Ignatius, *Ad Polycarp.* 5. P.G. 5, 724; Polycarp, *Ad Philipp.* 5, 3. P.G. 5, 1009; Justin, *Apologia.* P.G. 6, 349; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* P.G. 8, 224; Hippolytus, *In Proverb.* P.G. 10, 628; *de Virgine Cor.* id 871-4; Origen, *In Num.* 2, 1. P.G. 12, 590; Methodius, *Convivium decem virg.* P.G. 18, 27-220; Tertullian, *Ad Uxorem* 1, 7-8. P.L. 1, 1286-7; *de resurrect.* 8. P.L. 2, 806; Cyprian, *Ep.* 62, 11. P.L. 4, 366; *Testimon. adv. jud.* 3, 74. P.L. 4, 771; Ambrose, *de Viduis* 2, 9. P.L. 16, 250-1; Cassian, *de tribus gen. monachorum* 5. P.L. 49, 1094; Athenagoras, *Legatio pro christianis* P.G. 6, 965.

who pursued it began to constitute a kind of order or social group among the christian communities, clearly recognised under various names—ascetics, celibates, virgins and so on—and winning approval and honour from many.⁶

From ancient times until the compilation of Canon Law in our own days the Church, faithful to Christ her Spouse and loyal to her own principles, has gradually worked out with sure and unfaltering steps under the guidance of the Holy Spirit what pertains to the state of perfection. For those, who under many different forms, willingly and wholeheartedly profess the life of perfection, she has ever shown maternal solicitude. In two respects she has markedly favoured them in so holy an endeavour. In the first place she has not only accepted and recognised every single profession of perfection, always provided it be made in a public manner and witnessed on behalf of the Church, like that ancient and venerable blessing and consecration of virgins,⁷ which used once liturgically to be performed, but she has wisely confirmed such profession and zealously safeguarded it, according to many canonical prerogatives. Secondly, from the fourth century onwards, the Church has directed her gracious favour and devoted care, rightly and deservedly, to that complete and truly public profession of perfection which is made in societies and communities established by her consent, her approval and her command.

It is plain to all how closely and essentially linked has been the history of the Church's holiness and of her universal apostolate with the history and annals of canonical religious life. By the grace of the Holy Ghost, that unfailing source of life, they have daily developed in amazing diversity and been further strengthened by a new, ever deeper and more unshakable unity. No wonder then that even in the field of law the Church, firmly cleaving to the principle of action so clearly intimated by the far-seeing wisdom of God, should thus of set purpose have followed up and regulated the canonical state of perfection, so that she has rightly and deservedly been pleased to raise upon it the structure of church discipline, as upon one of its chief corner stones. Hence from the very first the publicly professed state of perfection has been counted among the three chief ecclesiastical states, and from it the Church has exclusively singled out the second order or rank of canonical persons (can. 107). Truly a fact worth weighing with grave attention: for the other two orders of

⁶ Acts 21, 8-10; cf. Ignatius, *Ad Smyrn.* 13. P.G. 5, 717; *Ad Polycarp.* 5. P.G. 5, 723; Tertullian, *de virginibus velandis* P.L. 2, 935; *de exhortatione castitatis*, 7. P.L. 2, 922; Cyprian, *de habitu virginum* 2, P.L. 4, 443; Jerome, *Ep.* 59, 4-6. P.L. 22, 582; Augustine, *Sermo* 214, P.L. 38, 1070; *contra Faust.* 5, 9. P.L. 42, 226.

⁷ Cf. Optatus, *de schism. donat.* 6. P.L. 11, 1071. Pontificale Rom. 2. *de bened. et consec. virginum.*

canonical persons, viz. clerics and laymen, are by divine law distinct in the Church. To this law ecclesiastical organisation conforms (cc. 107, 108 §3), for the Church is a society hierarchically constituted and appointed. However, this intermediate class of religious, set between clerics and layfolk yet comprising both (c. 107), is wholly chosen for its close and exceptional relationship to the goal of the Church, namely sanctification, which it pursues effectively by adequate means.

Moreover, to safeguard solemn and public profession from being rendered null and void, the Church has recognised this canonical state of perfection only in those societies established and regulated by herself. In this matter her tendency is to demand ever more stringent requirements, being satisfied only with Religious Orders (c. 488, 1), whose purpose and disposition she had in every instance not only again and again put to trial and weighed in the balance of doctrinal and philosophical principles, but had in very fact tested by actual experience. This is so rigorously and absolutely enforced by canon law, that in no instance, not even by way of exception, may the canonical state of perfection be recognised unless profession of it be made in a religious order approved by the Church. Finally the legal standing of the canonical state, insofar as it is a public state, has been wisely ruled by the Church. Thus as far as clerical religious orders are concerned, the order does duty for the diocese in those matters which have generally to do with the clerical life of the religious, and embodiment in an order is judged equivalent to incardination in a diocese (cc. III, §1; 115; 585).

All legislation dealing with religious was carefully collated, assessed and accurately compiled in the Code. The Second Book (Part 2) was devoted to religious; and the canonical state of perfection, viewed again as a public state, was in many ways confirmed therein. Thus was wisely concluded the work of Leo XIII of happy memory, the Constitution '*Conditae a Christo*',⁸ whereby Congregations taking simple vows were admitted to the ranks of Religious Orders properly so called: there seemed nothing further to add regarding the discipline of the canonical state of perfection. Yet the Church in happy magnanimity and with maternal solicitude deemed it fit to supplement her legislation on religious with a short codicil (tit. 17, lib. 2), to round it off in a fashion suited to the times. She was pleased to accord certain Associations, and they deserved well of her and frequently of civil society too, a full measure of equality with the canonical state of perfection. These Associations, though lacking some of the juridical requirements, for

⁸ Const. '*Conditae a Christo Ecclesiae*', 8 dec. 1900; cf. Leo XIII Acta, 20, 317-27.

example public vows (cc. 488, 1 et 7; 487), necessary to the complete canonical state of perfection, nevertheless, in matters essential to the life of perfection, are closely bound up with religious orders properly so called, both by strong resemblance and by a certain necessity.

The scope of these wise, prudent and benevolent regulations gave every encouragement to numberless souls, desirous of leaving the world and embracing this newly established and truly canonical state given over to the winning of perfection. Now our Lord in his bountiful loving kindness, being no respecter of persons,⁹ has time and again invited¹⁰ all the faithful to the pursuit and practice of perfection, and that in all circumstances. Hence he has disposed according to the sublime designs of his divine providence that even in the world, disfigured and distorted by so many vices, never more apparent than in our own day, very many bands of chosen souls should have flourished and flourish still, who burn with zeal for their own perfection. Whilst remaining in the world they are able, through a special vocation from God, to devise new and unrivalled forms of confederation which particularly answer the needs of the times, and in which many can lead a life wholly conducive to the attainment of Christian perfection.

While with all our heart commending to the prudent and zealous care of spiritual directors the noble efforts in the realms of conscience of souls striving for perfection, our present concern is with the external character of their Associations, so designed as to lead their own members, as it were by the hand, to a life of solid perfection. Nor is it a question here of each and every Association which in all sincerity pursues perfection in the world, but only with those which by their internal constitution, by the hierarchical form of their government, by their complete self-dedication (their only bond) which they require of their members properly so called, by their profession of the evangelical counsels, and finally because they are employed in the apostolate and Christian ministry, more nearly approach the canonical state of perfection, i.e. as far as its substance is concerned. Especially do we refer to those Societies whose members neither take public vows (tit. 17) nor follow the religious life in common, but make use of other external criteria.

These Associations, hereafter to be cited as 'Secular Institutes', began to be established in the first half of the last century. Nor was their inauguration without the special inspiration of divine Providence. Their purpose was 'to follow the evangelical counsels

⁹ 2. Paral 19, 7; Rom. 2, 11; Eph. 6, 9; Col. 3, 25.

¹⁰ Mt. 5, 48; 19, 12; Col. 4, 12; James 1, 4.

faithfully in the world, and to undertake those duties of charity which the religious orders were almost, or even absolutely prevented from carrying out, owing to the evils of the times'.¹¹ The first Institutes gave a good account of themselves. They proved conclusively by their work and deeds that, favoured by this exceptional vocation from God and help of divine grace, they could assuredly achieve even in the world not only an inward but an outward consecration to the Lord, almost comparable to that of the religious life, and definite and effective enough for their purpose. This they accomplished through the stringent and prudent choice of their members, whose training entailed careful formation, long withal, and through the sufficiently firm yet flexible organisation of their life. Thus they showed they could be regarded as a most timely instrument of apostolic endeavour for leavening secular life. For such manifold reasons, not infrequently 'the Holy See commended these Associations of the faithful, no less than specifically Religious Congregations'.¹²

As time went by and these Institutes happily grew in number it became increasingly clear in how many ways they could be turned to the effective support of the Church and of souls. They can well be applied to the earnest pursuit of perfection, at all times and places. Many, for whom the canonical life is not possible or feasible, can join such Institutes. Through their daily contact with family life, professional circles and civil society, those whose lives are dedicated to sanctification can leaven the whole. Their manifold apostolate and Christian ministry may be turned to good use where even priests and religious are forbidden or can make no headway. But on the other hand experience has shown that dangers and difficulties have not been wanting; in fact they have sometimes, even rather easily, beset this life of perfection. For it was a life led without the outward support of a religious habit; it was led voluntarily, and lacked the supervision of diocesan bishops, whose notice it could easily escape, or of Superiors who, not infrequently, dwelt a long way off. Discussion has also begun on the juridical nature of these Institutes, and on the mind of the Church in approving them. Here we think it timely to mention the decree '*Ecclesia Catholica*' published by the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Religious, and confirmed on 11 August 1889 by our predecessor of immortal memory Leo XIII (cf. A.S.S.23, 634).

In this, praise and approval were not withheld from these Insti-

¹¹ S.C. Episcoporum et Regularium dec. '*Ecclesia Cath.*' 11. aug. 1889; cf. A.S.S., 23, 634.

¹² *ibid.*

tutes. But it was declared that when the Sacred Congregation praised and approved these Institutes 'it was pleased to praise and approve them not as Religious Orders of solemn vows, or as true Religious Congregations of simple vows, but only as devout fraternities. In them, apart from such things as are demanded by the prevailing discipline of the Church, religious profession properly so called is not made. If any vows are taken, they are deemed to be of a private character, and not like those vows which are accepted by a lawful Superior in the name of the Church.' Furthermore, as the same Congregation went on to say, these sodalities are praised and approved under this essential condition, namely that they are fully and thoroughly known to their respective Ordinaries, to whose jurisdiction they are wholly subject. These prescripts and declarations of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars were timely in that they helped to modify the nature of these Institutes, and have governed their development and progress though not without imposing some restraints.

The Secular Institutes of this century have unobtrusively increased, and have assumed many forms, differing much from one another. Some are autonomous, others are linked in varying measures to Religious Societies. Nothing is said about them in the Apostolic Constitution '*Conditæ a Christo*' which concerned itself only with Religious Congregations. Moreover, the Code of Canon Law has purposely omitted all reference to these Institutes; as the time for framing laws concerning them did not seem expedient, it left the matter for future legislation.

Time and again we turned these matters over, impelled by the consciousness of our duty and by the paternal love which we cherish for those souls who so generously pursue sanctity in the world. No less are we influenced by our determination to discriminate wisely and strictly between these Societies. It is our resolve, moreover, to recognise as authentic only those Institutes which have, as their genuine and avowed aim, the life of perfection in all its fulness. We have to guard against the constant rise of fresh Institutes, the foundations of which are not infrequently insecurely and imprudently laid. Likewise we have to frame special legislation which fully and aptly meets the nature, aims and requirements of those Institutes deemed worthy of our approval. For this reason it is our resolve and decree that the same measures, which our predecessor of immortal memory, Leo XIII, so wisely and prudently effected to deal with Congregations under simple vows through the Apostolic Constitution '*Conditæ a Christo*' (loc. cit.) should be extended on behalf of Secular Institutes also. At our command and under our

direction, therefore, and after diligent examination by the Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office on all that falls within its jurisdiction, a general statute for Secular Institutes was drawn up and revised by the Sacred Congregation of Religious. In this present letter we give this statute our approval; and all that follows we decree and resolve and enact in virtue of our Apostolic Authority. Further, by decrees set forth above, we appoint the Sacred Congregation of Religious to put all these commands into execution, and grant all faculties needful and expedient so to act.

THE LAW GOVERNING LAY INSTITUTES

Article I.

Societies, whether clerical or lay, whose members profess the evangelical counsels in the world as their aim, in order to attain Christian perfection and the full exercise of the apostolate, come under the special name of Institutes or Secular Institutes; thus are they clearly distinguished from other general Associations of the faithful (Pars III, Lib. II, C.J.C.). Such Secular Institutes are subject to the laws of this Apostolic Constitution.

Article II.

1.—Since Secular Institutes neither allow the three public vows of religion (cans. 1308 1 and 488, 1), nor impose community life, or common domicile, on all their members according to the laws of the Church (cans. 487 ff. and 673 ff.).

(a) By the law of their rule neither are they, nor strictly speaking can they be described as Religious (cans. 487 and 488, 1), or Societies with community life (can. 673, 1).

(b) They are not bound by the law specific and exclusive to Religious Orders and to Societies of community life; nor can they invoke such law except when some prescript thereof, and especially if it obtain for Societies not taking public vows, is, in exceptional cases, found legally suitable and applicable to themselves.

2.—Whilst observing the general enactments of canon law applying to them, Institutes are governed by the following prescripts as by law distinctive to them, and which will more precisely meet their specific character and condition.

(a) By the general rules of this Apostolic Constitution, which lay down a statute which can be said to affect secular Institutes in particular.

(b) By the enactments which the Sacred Congregation of Religious shall have decided to promulgate as necessity arises or experience dictates; whether by interpretation or elaboration and application of the Apostolic Constitution, either for all or for some of these Institutes.

(c) By individual ratified Constitutions, as in the undermentioned

Articles (Arts. V-VIII), which prudently modify the general and particular enactments of the law described above (num. 1 and 2) according to the aims, needs and widely differing circumstances of particular Institutes.

Article III.

1.—For any devout Association of the faithful to achieve the status of a Secular Institute, in accordance with the Articles following hereafter, it must have these apart from other common requirements:

2.—With regard to the dedication of life and the profession of Christian perfection.

Associates who desire to be accounted members, in the stricter sense, of an Institute, in addition to those exercises of devotion and mortification undertaken by all who aspire to a life of perfection, must resolutely direct themselves to acquiring perfection according to the following stipulations:

(a) By profession of celibacy and perfect chastity genuinely made before God, and which is secured by vow, oath and consecration binding in conscience, according to the ruling of the Constitutions.

(b) By a vow or promise of obedience, of such a nature that they bind themselves by firm bond to dedicate themselves entirely to God and to works of charity or of the apostolate, and in all respects are always morally in the power and under the command (*sub manu et ductu*) of Superiors, according to the ruling of the Constitutions.

(c) By a vow or promise of poverty, in virtue of which they do not have the free, but a defined and restricted use of temporal goods, according to the ruling of the Constitutions.

3.—With regard to the embodiment of members in their own Institute, and the bond arising therefrom.

The bond, by which the Secular Institute and its members properly so called should be mutually joined together, must be:

(a) Enduring (*stabile*), in accordance with the ruling of the Constitutions, either for life or for a set period, in which latter case it must be renewed on expiry (can. 488, 1).

(b) Mutual and comprehensive (*plenum*), so that in accordance with the ruling of the Constitutions, the member hands himself wholly over to the Institute, and the Institute takes care of and is responsible for him.

4.—With regard to buildings and houses of the Institute held in common.

Even if Secular Institutes do not oblige all their members according to the ruling of the law to the common life or to live under the same roof (Art. II, (a)), nevertheless they should either of neces-

sity or for convenience have one or several common houses in order that in them:

(a) Those who exercise the authority of the Institute, the supreme in particular as well as the regional authority, may dwell.

(b) Members can live or come together to receive and carry out instruction, to take part in the spiritual exercises and other reasons of a similar kind.

(c) Members can be accommodated who, because of ill-health or for other reasons, cannot provide for themselves; or for whom it is deemed unwise (*non expedit*) to leave living privately, either alone or in associations with others.

Article IV.

1.—Secular Institutes (Art. 1) come under the Sacred Congregation of Religious, saving the rights of the Sacred Congregation of Propagation of the Faith as set down in can. 252, 3, with reference to Societies and Seminaries whose aim is the Foreign Missions.

2.—Societies (*consociationes*) whose whole object and function are not identical with the requirements of Art. I, and those also which lack the essentials reviewed in Arts. I and III of this Apostolic Constitution, are governed by the law which affects Associations of the faithful, can. 684 ff., and come under the Sacred Congregation of the Council save for the prescript of can. 252, 3, which deals with missionary countries.

Article V.

1.—Bishops, but not Vicars General or Capitular, can establish Secular Institutes, and raise them to the status of moral persons, in accordance with can. 252, para. 1 and 2.

2.—However, Bishops must neither found these Institutes nor allow them to be founded without consulting the Sacred Congregation of Religious, in accordance with can. 492, 1 and the Article which here follows.

Article VI.

1.—When Bishops, in accordance with Art. V, 2, make preliminary enquiries concerning the granting of permission for the erection of these Institutes, the Sacred Congregation of Religious must issue instructions (bearing in mind their own decisions in parallel matters) in accordance with their enactments governing the erection of purely diocesan Congregations and Societies of community life (nos. 3-5). In addition, measures heretofore or subsequently introduced by the same Sacred Congregation must be taken into account.

2.—Once the Bishops have obtained the licence from the Sacred Congregation of Religious, they shall in nowise be prevented from establishing the foundation, freely and as of their own right. How-

ever, Bishops must not neglect to inform officially the same Sacred Congregation that the establishment has been put into effect.

Article VII.

1.—Secular Institutes, which have obtained a decree of commendation or approval from the Holy See, come under pontifical jurisdiction (cans. 488, 3; 673, 2).

2.—In order that Secular Institutes of diocesan patronage may obtain a decree of commendation or approval, conditions similar to those required by statutes nos. 6ff. are required. Generally those conditions will be judged in the light of parallel decisions made by the Sacred Congregation of Religious, and decisions heretofore and hereafter taken by the same Sacred Congregation on behalf of Congregations and Societies living a common life.

3.—For the first, the renewed (if needs be), and the definitive approval of these Institutes and their Constitutions, the following procedure must be adopted:

(a) The first discussion will take place under the presidency of His Excellence the Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the Secretariate, or of his delegate. Beforehand the data will be prepared in the normal manner, and set forth with the appreciation and recommendation of at least one of the Consultors.

(b) Then the whole matter is submitted to the examination and decision of the full Assembly of the Sacred Congregation of the Council, under the presidency of his Eminence the Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation. Experts or the more experienced among the Consultors should also be summoned, as necessity or expediency indicates.

(c) The resolution of the Assembly shall be made known by his Eminence the Cardinal Prefect, or by his Excellency the Secretary in audience with His Holiness the Pope, and it shall be submitted to His supreme judgment.

Article VIII.

In addition to their own laws, Secular Institutes are subject to diocesan bishops in all laws now prevailing, or subsequently to be enacted, according to the statutes governing non-exempt Congregations and Societies leading a common life.

Article IX.

The internal government of Secular Institutes can be hierarchic, following the pattern prevailing among Religious Orders and Societies of common life. This form of government, however, can only be instituted by the same Sacred Congregation if they, guided by their decisions promulgated in similar instances, deem such government to be conformable to the specific character, purpose and conditions of those Institutes.

Article X.

This Apostolic Constitution in no wise alters the laws and obligations of Institutes already in existence, no matter whether they were founded by Bishops in consultation with the Holy See or approved direct by the Holy See.

These aforementioned things we proclaim, declare and sanction; likewise we decree this Apostolic Constitution always to be and to continue to be permanent, valid and in force; further, we decree that its enactments will prevail and obtain, notwithstanding all things (no matter how important) to the contrary. Therefore, no one may lawfully infringe this Constitution, which we promulgate, nor transgress it with impunity.

Given at St Peter's in Rome on the second day of February, the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in the year 1947, the eighth of our Pontificate.

PIUS PP. XII.

THREE SHEWINGS OF GOD'S LOVE

BY

AMBROSE FARRELL, O.P.



THE opening words of the Catholic Catechism give a very simple answer to the enquiry concerning the origin and purpose of man. 'Who made you? God made me.' Here we are immediately confronted with the problem of our own origin, since as soon as our minds awaken from the slumbers of unconsciousness, we become supremely aware that we are alive, and seek for an explanation. The question then arises, 'Why are you alive?' And the correct answer must be, 'Because God loves me'. God's love is creative and the cause of things. But it may be asked, 'Why does God love you?' The answer to this query is found in the fact that God is what he is. He is infinite goodness, and wills to communicate himself to others. St Thomas has said, 'to love anything is nothing else than to will good to that thing'. (I, 20, 2.) It was by an act of love that 'God made me out of nothing by his word'. Moreover not only does God create, but he preserves in being whatsoever he has made; 'In him we live, and move, and are', says St Paul (Acts. 17, 28). Each living soul is indeed an immediate and distinct creation of God, and because of its immortality it can never die

or suffer extinction. God 'gives to all of us life, and breath and all we have' (Acts, 17, 25). He is the Maker, the Keeper, and the Lover.

Then, 'Why did God make you?' 'What does he expect of you?' The answer surely is, 'God made me to know him, love him, and serve him in this world, and to be happy with him for ever in the next'. The ultimate purpose or reason why God created man is the enjoyment of eternal bliss. Heaven is the reward held out for services rendered. The mainsprings of vital service due to God, are knowledge coming from Faith, and love born of Charity. The just man lives by Faith, i.e., his inner convictions and beliefs are the driving force and guide to his life and behaviour. '*Lucerna pedibus meis verbum tuum*', 'Thy word is a lantern to my feet' (Ps. 118).

The human response to the realisation of creatureliness (i.e. utter dependence on God as Creator) is worship. Worship is the effort to give back to God something of that which he himself has bestowed. It is inspired by Faith, Hope, and Charity, whereby, 'I must believe in him, I must hope in him, and I must love him, with my whole heart', as a condition for salvation. The highest expression of this self-abasement or worship is found in sacrifice. In the new dispensation the supreme and most perfect sacrifice is that of Calvary, which is renewed or re-enacted in the Mass. It is made available to us, and may be said to be ours in a very real sense, not simply because Christ our Lord is of our flesh and blood, or even because he is divine, but because God in his loving providence has from eternity so ordained. In reality the whole divine plan as unfolded in the Christian dispensation is not only a manifestation of an infinite might which is inevitable and irresistible, it is also a disclosure (or revelation) of God's love for his creatures. 'He hath made us only to himself, and restored us by his blessed Passion, and keepeth us in his blessed love; and all this is of his Goodness.' (Julian of Norwich, *Revelations*, Ch. V.)

Assuredly the simple acceptance of a creed, or the assent to certain Christian propositions or formulas as true, is not integral Christianity. Christianity is essentially a life, modelled on Christ the divine exemplar. As the human and divine are combined within Christ himself, for he is perfect God and perfect man, so the Christian life includes within it elements which are divine as well as human. That Christ-life cannot be lived by purely human effort; it is dependent at every point and stage on divine ministration at its birth and in its growth. For this no amount of human planning will do, nor will the ideal be realised simply by throwing oneself into

social activities, however good these may be in themselves. Rather is it a question of being subdued by grace, and of yielding consciously to a moulding process wrought by God's hand, through which he alone can create the pattern of his own design. There is need of passivity, of 'being humbled under the mighty hand of God,' of becoming pliable to God's moulding influence upon which Christian formation depends. St Paul wrote to the Romans, 'we are well assured that everything helps to secure the good of those who love God, those whom he has called in fulfilment of his design. All those who from the first were known to him, he has designed from the first to be moulded into the image of his Son, who is thus to become the eldest-born among many brethren.' (Rom. 8, 29.) By the self-same eternal and irrevocable act on the part of God, both Jesus Christ (God-made-man) and we were pre-ordained to, or 'designed for' eternal life. (cfr. III, 24, 4.) And by an eternal destiny God foreordained that our salvation should be fulfilled through Jesus Christ our Lord (ibid.). Or in other words, according to St Paul, 'He has chosen us out, in Christ, before the foundation of the world, to be saints, to be blameless in his sight, for love of him; marking us out beforehand (so his will decreed) to be his adopted children through Jesus Christ. Thus he would manifest the splendour of that grace by which he has taken us into his favour in the person of his beloved Son.' (Ephes. I, 5-6.) This loving design of God is centred in Jesus Christ, and in us inasmuch as we are Christ's members.

Evidently our creation is more than the happening of coming forth into being out of primordial nothingness, it is an act of grace, by which God 'has taken us into his favour in the person of his beloved Son'.

This truth becomes the more striking and impressive if we consider that it is not as though we had first loved God; but he has loved us first, and 'sent out his Son to be an atonement for our sins' (1 Jn. 4, 10). 'Enemies of God, we were reconciled to him through his Son's death; reconciled to him, we are surer than ever of finding salvation in his Son's life' (Rom. 5, 10). As St Paul reflects, 'It is hard enough to find anyone who will die on behalf of a just man, although perhaps there may be those who will face death for one so deserving. But here, as if God meant to prove how well he loves us, it was while we were all sinners that Christ, in his own appointed time, died for us' (Rom. 5, 7-8).

Revelation is the divine means which enables us to know what God is like. In the New Testament God has revealed himself as love, '*Deus caritas est*'—'God is charity: and he that abideth in

charity abideth in God, and God in him' (1 Jn. 4, 16). The divine love is based on the fulness of his goodness. Because God is infinitely good in himself he is infinitely lovable, and he loves himself first with an infinite love. God's love is not a passion, it is not an activity aroused by the perception of something outside himself, it is an act of his will necessitated by the very goodness of his nature. It is impossible for him not to love himself, and his goodness is so compelling in its loveliness that he loves himself of necessity. Without any selfishness, the love of God is centred in himself, and is identified with himself as the sovereign good, which is to be preferred above all else. Even if God had created nothing it would still be true that God is love.

It is characteristic of goodness that the more perfect it is the more it will strive to communicate itself most intimately and completely. It strives to give and to impart that which itself possesses. '*De ratione boni est, quod se aliis communicet*' (III, 1, 1). Thus in the physical order the sun diffuses abroad its all-pervading heat and light; plants and animals engender a life which is similar to their own. The saint will strive to arouse that enthusiasm and holiness in others which he already has. This principle is pre-eminently verified of God.

Within the life of the Blessed Trinity the Eternal Father, by necessity of the Godhead, imparts to his Son by an eternal begetting the whole goodness of the divine nature which is his. The Father and the Son in a mutual divine embrace breathe forth love, which is the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit of love.

But there is another type of love in God which does not spring up out of the necessity of his nature, but is a free act of giving to others out of his bounty. With an abundance of love God has elected to give others a share in his riches. Yet God has no need of us, and the creation of the universe makes God no greater than he already is.

The generosity and fecundity of God's love are revealed in three outstanding ways. (1) By the creation of man, and his elevation to the supernatural life of grace, (2) by the Incarnation, and (3) by the institution of the Holy Eucharist.

We may apply our principles briefly to each of these three in turn.

(1) *Creation*: God made all things for his own honour and glory. He shows his love for the things that he made by imparting to them as it were by way of reflection something of his own goodness, being and life. The end of creation is the divine goodness. St Thomas explains the manner in which the parts of creation are related to

each other and to God as their final end: 'If we wish to assign an end to any whole, and to the parts of that whole, we shall find first that each and every part exists for the sake of its proper function, as the eye for the function of seeing; secondly, that less honourable parts exist for the more honourable, as the senses for the intellect, the lungs for the heart; and thirdly, that all parts are for the perfection of the whole, as the matter for the form, since the parts are, as it were, the matter of the whole. Furthermore, the whole man exists for the sake of an extrinsic end, that end being the fruition of God. So, therefore, in the parts of the universe also every creature exists for its own proper function and perfection, and the less noble for the nobler, as those creatures that are less noble than man exist for the sake of man, whilst each and every creature exists for the perfection of the entire universe. Furthermore, the entire universe, with all its parts, is ordained towards God as its end, inasmuch as it imitates, as it were, and shows forth the divine goodness, to the glory of God. Reasonable creatures, however, have in some special and higher manner God as their end, since they can reach him through the functioning of their own powers, by knowing and loving him.' (I, 65, 2). The abundant generosity of God is shown by the fact that he acts not for his own utility but solely for the sake of his own goodness (I, 44, 4 ad 1.) God loves all existing things because he infuses and creates the goodness which they themselves possess. (I, 20, 2.) Nor does the fact that he permits evil militate against God's goodness and love, for as St Augustine expresses it, 'So great is the goodness of God that he will not permit a shadow of evil, unless it were within his power out of evil to draw good'. (*Enchiridion*, cap. xi.)

But furthermore, Christian revelation tells us that we are made to live by a life which is altogether above our own natural life. God always intended us to live a supernatural life, and has set before us a supernatural end. This life we can neither merit nor earn, since it is a free gift from God, which is on that account named grace. It is a newness of life making us 'partakers of the divine nature' (2 Peter, 1, 4), and enabling us to know and love God in ways in which a man cannot know and love him by his own natural forces. As with all life it is destined to grow strong, to spread and to triumph, until at length it issues forth into the vision of God. 'At present', says St Paul, 'I see as by means of a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in a fragmentary way, but then I shall know even as I am known.' (1 Cor. 13.)

The gift of grace was bestowed on our first parents to be trans-

mitted to their posterity, but it was lost by the Fall. That new life has now to be regained by our being incorporated afresh into Christ the Second Adam, who as the God-man, is the source of life itself.

(2) *The Incarnation*: The mystery of the Word made flesh. 'God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting.' (Jn. 3, 16.) In a manner far surpassing that of creation God has manifested his love by bestowing on mankind his most precious gift of all, his own Son. Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man. He was sent forth into the world by his Eternal Father to redeem us from sin and hell, by the pouring out of his life's blood, and to be to us 'the way, the truth and the life.' It befits God, who is the highest good, to communicate himself in the highest and most intimate way. This he has done by sending the divine person of the Son to be tabernacled in our human nature; 'And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us'. The Son in his turn out of obedience to his father and out of an undying love for souls, as priest and victim offered himself as redemptive sacrifice on the altar of the Cross. 'Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends' (Jn. 15, 13). God willed to shower his own goodness on the human race by requiring of his Son an heroic act of love in reparation for the sins of the world. Christ's love was so great and infinite in worth that he gained the victory over sin and over death itself, 'death no longer hath a mastery over him'.

(3) *The Holy Eucharist*: 'Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end.' (Jn. 13, 1.) Before leaving this world Christ our Lord at the Last Supper instituted the Holy Eucharist to be both a sacrifice and a sacrament. The Blessed Sacrament is therefore as it were a prolongation of the Incarnation. As a sacrifice we have Calvary brought into our very midst, that its fruits may be applied to our very souls. As a sacrament Christ is truly present in the vesture of bread and wine. Our faith tells us that the Blessed Sacrament contains the body and the blood, the soul and divinity of Christ. He gives himself to be the food and nourishment of souls. In the words of the Council of Trent, 'Our Saviour, when about to depart out of this world to the Father, instituted this Sacrament, in which he poured forth, as it were, the riches of his divine love towards men, making a remembrance of his wonderful works; and he commanded us in the participation thereof to venerate his memory and to show forth his death until he come to judge the world. And he willed also that this Sacrament

should be received as the spiritual food for souls, whereby may be fed and strengthened those who live with his life, who said, "He that eateth me the same also shall live by me", and as an antidote whereby we may be freed from daily faults and be preserved from mortal sins. He willed furthermore that it would be a pledge of our glory to come, and of everlasting happiness, and thus be a symbol of that one body, whereof he is the Head, and to which he would fain have us as members be united by the closest bonds of faith, hope and charity.' (Sess. xiii, cap. 11.)

The most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar is in a very special sense the Sacrament of Love. The Last Supper was the chosen moment for its institution, leaving an undying memory of our Redeemer as the divine lover in his last will and testament. Only the divine Love could have found so efficacious a means of sustaining the soul's supernatural life. 'He that eateth me the same also shall live by me.' The very purpose of this Sacrament is to prevent the love of God in the heart of man from growing cold by giving it a lasting strength, ardour and intensity. As Our Lord said, 'He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me and I in him'. The very purpose of the Christian life is to be brought into union with God, but this cannot be without a love that is sustained and fortified by him who is the living Bread.

THE WORSHIP OF LOVE

BY

CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.



ONE of the more important aspects of the growth of the spiritual life is the way in which the higher stages, far from leaving the lower entirely behind, do in fact reproduce the earlier virtues and activities in a new milieu; a higher synthesis is reached. Thus it would be a mistake to imagine that merely because progress in grace means first the predominance of the moral virtues and then the theological, that therefore such virtues as religion, obedience and various forms of asceticism fade away in the wings as faith, hope and charity take the stage. There are some who consider that they have reached a degree of perfection where obedience hardly applies; love predominates so that they are free from the hindrance of the moral virtues, particularly from the inconvenience of having to do what with other men they are told. They feel themselves above the law.

But in fact these ascetic virtues are raised to a far more perfect and instinctive mode by the grace of unitive prayer and the flowering of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. We have only to follow the movement of the passion and death of Christ to recognise this. The obedience of 'nevertheless not as I will but as thou wilt' is transformed on Calvary itself into the complete and utter surrender of his whole spirit—'Into thy hands I commend my spirit'. The abandonment to the will of God is typical of these higher forms of supernatural life and it is the perfection of obedience. Or again the promptitude which is the property of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is a promptitude by which a man reacts 'instinctively' without deliberation to the special movements of God's will; it is again the perfection of obedience.

Similarly the act of the virtue of religion which shows itself fully in worship and sacrifice cannot be transcended. The child of God, however wrapt in the loving embrace of God, yet remains a creature with the duty of creaturely worship as well as that of filial love. We have already noted the subtle and significant difference of language between *The Cloud of Unknowing* and the *Epistle of Privy Counsel*, which, though both undoubtedly by the same author and both about the same state of prayer, yet speak, the one simply in terms of love, the other in terms of offering and worship. But we may take the *Epistle of Prayer* in its theological treatment of *Devotion* as the bridge linking the two.¹ For 'devotio', taken as it is here directly from St Thomas, is the innermost and central act of the virtue of religion and itself shares in the *promptitude* which is also the property of the gifts. In this way it may be considered as the connecting link between what is strictly ascetical and what is strictly mystical. As the author of these treatises suggests, devotion is in a sense independent of the external act of religion which may so easily be abused, such as 'fasting, waking, sharp wearing and all these others'. Devotion in itself is the act of a man's will handing himself over promptly and fully to the service of God; and therefore it implies not only that a man serves God interiorly by choice, but that he does so with alacrity and with desire. And no man undertakes an arduous service with alacrity unless he also loves him whom he serves. That is why the moral act of devotion requires for its exercise a special influx of the theological virtue of charity, so that our author, after referring to St Thomas's definition of devotion and St Bernard's demand that the service of God 'should be done swiftly and gladly', goes on to speak at some length of 'reverent affection', a phrase which admir-

¹ The chronological order of these works has not been definitely determined. It would be convenient theologically to regard *The Cloud* as coming first, *The Epistle of Prayer* second, and *The Epistle of Privy Counsel* third. But that may be only an *a priori* plan.

ably combines the ideas of service or worship and love.

And all these other things, as is fasting, waking, sharp wearing, and all these other, they are needful in as much as they are helply to get this (reverent affection), so that without this they are nought. And this without them is sometimes sufficient at the full by itself, and is often times full worthily had and come to of full without any of the others. . . . All this manner of working before said of this reverent affection, when it is brought in by these two thoughts of dread and of hope coming before, may well be likened to a tree that were full of fruit; of the which tree, dread is that party that is within in the earth that is the root. And hope is that party that is above the earth that is the body (trunk) with the boughs. In that hope is certain and stable, it is the body; in that it stirreth men to works of love, it is the boughs; but this reverent affection is evermore the fruit. (*Epistle of Prayer*, Gardner, pp. 81-3).

And he goes on to say that this fruit must become full ripe and fall from the tree so as to be offered to God for his own sake 'and not for his goods'. There can be no doubt after reading this that the theological virtues are closely interwoven in the texture of true devotion. St Thomas shows that 'meditation' concerning God's goodness and generosity as well as concerning one's own infirmities, is under God's grace the cause of devotion, so that it is evidently bound up with the life of prayer—the higher one's prayer the greater is its effect in devotion and 'reverent affection'. And such prayer and devotion produce a true interior happiness—'God shall be knitted with the ghostly glue of grace on his party and the lovely consent in gladness of spirit on thy party'. (ibid. p. 88).²

Having before us this teaching on the place of devotion in the mystical life, it is not difficult to understand the references to worship and to offering in the *Epistle of Privy Counsel*. In the state reached by the soul by 'noughting' itself and by being raised to the 'naked intent' upon God, there would seem at first to be little opening for worship. The soul is not to consider itself, neither as to its sins nor as to its good qualities; there is therefore nothing created upon which it can fix its attention in order to offer it to God. In the abject poverty of the 'nought' it has nothing to offer. Nor can it praise and worship God for anything that he does to the soul; for in this state the naked intent rests exclusively on the 'isness', the Being of God, and does not look at any of his attributes or activities. Nevertheless the soul remains a creature, and however close be her union with God

² The whole of St Thomas's question on Devotion (II-II, 82) should be read in this connection. It is interesting that St Thomas distinguishes the part played by charity from that of devotion in the cleaving unto God '*per quandam spiritus unionem*'; and that *The Epistle of Prayer* concludes the treatment of 'reverent affection' by quoting and applying the words of St Paul *Qui adhaeret Deo unus spiritus est cum illo*. (p. 88).

within the depths of his triune life, she still retains the duties of the dependent, the servant of the Lord. In the union which is here described—'this work'—when the soul is stripped of all she has save the naked intent, she remains aware only of her own being and the divine Being; and therein is revealed this pure and absolute dependence which will always keep her affection *reverent*.

For he is thy being, and in him thou art what thou art, not only by cause and by being, but also he is in thee both thy cause and thy being . . . evermore saving this difference betwixt thee and him, that he is thy being and thou not his. (*P.U.* c. 1, p. 181).

With this preparation the soul can approach God with the single thought of being and offer to him the worship of a lover, offering being to Being.

That that I am, Lord, I offer unto thee; for thou it art. (*ibid.* p. 182).

Such is the prayer of oblation which the soul can utter without introducing a sense of multiplicity into her relations with God. Religion is said to be only a 'potential part' of justice because the element of otherness which should separate the participants in a just transaction, cannot be fully realised in the relationship between man and God. In the union of love this truth is most clearly revealed. The soul is God's. It has nothing to offer except the dependence of its being. The author quotes from the Book of Proverbs, 'Worship thy Lord with thy substance' (3, 9) and he interprets this not as referring to possessions of a worldly sort, but simply that

thou do whole worship to thy Lord God with thy substance, offering up unto him plainly and wholly thine only self, all that thou art and such as thou art, but generally and not specially—that is, without special beholding to that that thou art—so that thy sight be not scattered nor thy feeling defouled, the which would make thee less one with thy God in purity of spirit. (c. 3 pp. 188-9).

This 'whole worship', the author goes on to say, becomes a 'continual sacrifice of praising' first of all for God's own sake and then for self and for all one's 'even Christians', and it is therefore closely linked with Christ's sacrifice which was offered that all might become one with God again (pp. 190-2). Brought in this way to the foot of the crucifix and taught to regard the central Offering of the whole world in terms of love, remembering at the same time how Christ is sung of as the '*Victima caritatis*', it is not difficult for us to discover these heights of prayer in the offering of the Mass which is identical with that of Calvary. The author here makes no mention of this unique act of worship. But the reader should not stop short with him in his analysis and description of this prayer of union, but should go on to apply the teaching to practical things of daily life, and particularly

to the most practical of all prayers the offering of the Mass, for, as St Vincent Ferrer said, the Mass is the highest work of contemplation that is possible.

If we compare this teaching about the 'continual sacrifice of praising' with St John of the Cross's writings, we shall find that his language is far more in line with that of *The Cloud* than of the *Epistle of Privy Counsel*. He writes often of the touch of being to Being, substance to Substance when the soul has become God's bride. But he refers seldom to any kind of act of religion as such. In the *Spiritual Canticle* he writes of the fruition of all the virtues in this union: 'In many of these visits the soul is conscious of all her virtues within her spirit, since He has given her light; and then with wondrous delight and fragrance of love she gathers them all together and offers them to the Beloved, even as a bunch of beautiful flowers. . . . The soul offers herself together with the virtues, which is the greatest service that she can render Him' (Stanza 16, Peers ii, 275). But the Mystical Doctor does not seem to have worked out in any detail the nature of this service of love or reverent affection which reproduces the moral virtues in the new realm of the theological. He writes in language very similar to the passage from the *Epistle of Privy Counsel* already quoted: 'The soul that is united and transformed in God breathes God in God with the same Divine breathing with which God, while in her, breathes her in Himself'. (ibid. st. 38 p. 176). And he refers this to the priestly prayer of Christ asking for this union of love to be realised in his Apostles: 'That they may be one and the same thing in Us'. All this hints at the great depths which remain hidden beneath the obscure expressions which these writers use to convey some idea of the way of union in the fulness of charity. It is to the credit of the author of *The Cloud* that he has gone so far in showing the synthesis between worship and love. He even goes one step farther:

And thus shalt thou knittingly, in a manner that is marvellous, worship God with himself. For that that thou art thou hast it of him and he it is. And although thou hast a beginning in thy substantial creation—the which was sometime nought—yet hath thy being been evermore in him without beginning and ever shall be without ending, as himself is. (*P.C.*, c. 4 p. 195).

The soul seems here to be linked so closely with the Word as to be drawn into the intimate communings of the Trinity, as indeed she is by participating in the divine life. But the Word, of course, can only be said to offer worship metaphorically since all the divine persons are equal. Yet in so far as all things are made in the Word and represent the Word in the created aureola round about the Godhead, the Word may thus be said to worship in the creatures which reflect

him and yet worship. And in this 'activity' of the Word the soul which has entered the union of love most intimately shares.

We may safely conclude therefore, that anyone who has reached the stage described by the author of *The Cloud* has attained to a perfection which is one of the most whole and most holy to which he can attain in this life. With this perfection of obedience to God's will in the promptitude of devotion he is already governed largely by the gift of Wisdom. He is no longer merely directed by long and arduous rational speculations but by the sudden movement of the spirit.

All this shall be done suddenly, listily and graciously, without business or travail of thyself. . . . This sweet subtle working which in itself is the highest wisdom of the Godhead graciously descending into man's soul. (*P.C.* cc. 4-5, p. 196).

This is 'the point of perfection', as he calls it in the *Epistle of Prayer*, that perfection of man's soul which is 'nought else but a onehead made betwixt God and it in perfect charity'. (*P.C.*, c. 7, p. 210). It is perfection because it includes all in one, prudence in wisdom and religion in love, and is worked directly by God himself.

Almighty God with his grace must always be the chief stirrer and worker, either with means or without, and thou only . . . but the consenter and the sufferer. (*ibid.* p. 212).

So perfect indeed is the working of God in the heights where means and diversity have been set on one side that the 'proximate potency', the immediate capacity to be thus raised to God is brought about by him in the work itself. 'Ableness to this work is one to the work itself' (*Cloud*, c. 34 p. 85). In the very desire for it the soul has it, and God has given both the desire and the union. The distance, to speak metaphorically, between potency and act have been reduced to the minimum, so that the man who thus prays remains a creature and yet lives in the ever present, eternal act of the life of God. This is the perfection of praise and worship, the reward of all the service and worship of the moral virtues, of all the sufferings and victimisation through which the soul must first of all pass. All human virtues and all human praise are turned into divine activities. 'In this new life', says St John of the Cross, 'which begins when the soul has reached this perfection of union with God . . . all the desires of the soul and its faculties according to its inclinations and operations . . . are changed into divine operations. And as each living creature lives by its operation . . . the soul having its operations in God, through the union that it has with God, lives the life of God'. And he describes the operations of the faculties of memory, understanding and will as they now work in the divine manner. (*Living Flame*, ii, 33-4, Peers, iii, 157-8).

CYPRIAN THE CHRISTIAN

BY

G. M. DURNFORD

IT is a deplorable loss to Catholic reading that 'The Library of the Fathers', the classic series of translations edited by Pusey, Keble and Newman should have been allowed to remain unfinished and long out of print. Moreover, it is already more than a century since these vernacular versions first appeared, and they have never been surpassed: fine scholarship and loving care alike went to their making, and when we pray for England's return to the Faith, the re-availability in our language of that patristic literature whose study brought the greatest of English converts¹ into the Church should be covered by our intention.

Among the first members of the series, in 1839² to be exact, there appeared the 'Treatises of Saint Cyprian'³ the third-century bishop and martyr of Carthage, to be followed in due course by the companion volume of his Epistles.⁴ The researches of a later day would doubtless impose the alteration of a word here and there whose precise connotation has been established by experts on the Latin of the African Fathers, specialists such as E. W. Watson⁵ or Canon Bayard⁶ of Lille: upon the style of these two books as appropriate to their subject-matter it would be difficult to improve, and from them there emerges to full stature the living figure of the original author, essentially a man of action rather than of letters.

Newman's graceful Preface⁷ to Part I embodies the contemporary

1 See *Newman et les Pères* by Denys Gorce (Editions du Cerf, 1933), a charming contribution to the literature of Newman, written to commemorate the centenary of the Oxford Movement's starting-point, when the first of the 'Tracts for the Times' was launched on September 9, 1833.

2 In a letter from Newman to Mrs Mozley, dated Jan. 9, 1839, he writes: 'I think you will be much interested in parts of the forthcoming volume of St Cyprian. The Treatises on *Mortality*, on *Patience*, on *Envy*, to *Demetrius* and on *The Lord's Prayer* are especially touching' (Correspondence, Vol. II, p. 278).

3 'Library of the Fathers' Vol. III, Part I (Parker, Oxford, 1839).

4 *ibid.* Vol. III, Part II (1844).

5 *The Style and Language of St Cyprian*, by E. W. Watson of St John's College, Oxford. (*Studia Biblica et Ecclesiastica* Vol. IV. Clarendon Press, 1892).

6 *Le Latin de Saint Cyprien* (Paris, 1902).

7 Newman made himself responsible for the Preface and supposedly for the English version of Pontius: the rest of the translation was the work of the Rev. C. Thornton, of Christ Church, Oxford. To the *Epistles* Pusey contributed a longer introduction, containing some fine writing, the translation being due to the Rev. H. Carey, of Worcester College.

life of St Cyprian by Pontius, his deacon, as well as the *Acta* of his martyrdom⁸, but more interesting and more certain evidence is borne to his character and conversion by the first treatise, *Ad Donatum*,⁹ an autobiographical fragment addressed to an intimate friend to whom he is induced to open his mind by the lovely setting in which their talk took place: a peaceful vine-clad arbour in an autumn garden at the vintage time.

It is impossible not to be reminded of Augustine when Cyprian speaks of the tremendous mental conflict he had to break with his old life and ingrained habits, the infirmities that clung to him 'like slaves born in my house',¹⁰ then the miraculously sudden change of heart wrought by the *undae genitalis*, the life-giving water of baptism. St Cyprian was not a profound or original thinker, scarcely even a theologian *ex professo*, but *Ad Donatum* assures him of a place midway between St Paul and St Augustine as a Doctor of grace. Baptismal grace especially was to prove a constantly-recurring theme throughout his writings,¹¹ although he nowhere quite recaptures the candour and beauty of this first discourse.¹²

The treatise *De Dominica Oratione* (On the Lord's Prayer)¹³ seems to come naturally next in order. 'It is praying like friends and familiars to offer up to God of his own, to mount unto God's hearing with the petitioning of Christ. Let the Father recognise the Son's

⁸ Appended to the Life of St Cyprian by Donald Attwater in Butler's *Lives of the Saints* (New Edition) is a useful note by Fr Thurston, S.J.: The Letters of St Cyprian, a brief notice in the *De Viris Illustribus* of St Jerome, the 'Passion' of the Saint, and a brief biographical sketch ascribed to his deacon, Pontius, form the main sources of our information. Harnack in Vol. XXXIX of *Texte und Untersuchungen* has devoted a paper to *Das Leben Cyprianus von Pontius*, and describes it as the earliest Christian biography in existence. Reigenstein, on the other hand, in the *Heidelberg Sitztenberichte*, Phil. Hist. Klasse, 1913, takes a less favourable view. For him it is unimportant as a historical source. See upon the whole matter Père Delehaye: *Les Passions des Martyres et les Genres littéraires* (1921) pp. 82-104. If Delehaye is right we cannot even describe the so-called 'Proconsular Acts' of St Cyprian as 'an unique record of the trials of a martyr in all its authenticity and purity' (Attwater). Trustworthy as the document may be, it is not an exact copy of the official record.

⁹ Entitled by Mr Thornton 'On the Grace of God'. Migne (t. IV, col. 206) places *Ad Donatum* with the Epistles, not with the Treatises.

¹⁰ See *Library of the Fathers*, Vol. III, Pt. i, p. 3 and *Confessions of St Augustine*, especially Bk. VIII, Ch. xi.

¹¹ Hartel's index to the Vienna Corpus edition of St Cyprian's writings contains upwards of a hundred and thirty references to Baptism.

¹² In *Tertullien et Saint Cyprien* (Textes et Commentaires—Gabalda, 1930), a valuable book of selections and his latest contribution to the literature of St Cyprian, Canon Bayard reproduces the *Ad Donatum in toto*.

¹³ pp. 177 ff. Quotations, unless otherwise stated, are from the *Library of the Fathers* edition. The Latin text used is Hartel, Vienna Corpus edition in 3 vols. I, Treatises, II, Letters, III, Index and spurious works,

words when we offer up our prayer' and 'address ourselves to God as a Father . . . a name which none of us in prayer would have dared to reach unto, had not he himself allowed us thus to pray'. 'Our Father' and 'Our Bread' Cyprian repeats, and 'when we stand praying . . . we ought to be alive and intent towards our prayers with the whole heart'.

This sermon of sermons on the *Pater Noster*, so justly esteemed by Hilary and Augustine¹⁴ in their day, follows Tertullian's treatment of the same theme pretty closely,¹⁵ but though entirely lacking Tertullian's brilliance and originality, Cyprian surpasses his acknowledged master¹⁶ on the moral plane; elsewhere, if not in this treatise, one is conscious in reading him that he is sounder and theologically more 'in the middle of the road'. *De Dominica Oratione* would be valuable could it be reprinted as a tract, with parallel Latin and English text, to Benedictine oblates and others seeking to draw from the wellsprings of the old spirituality for their *lectio divina*.

'Alive and intent' is exactly what his treatises, still more his letters, show St Cyprian to have been, from the first moment of his whole-hearted single-minded conversion, through the short crowded years of his troubled episcopate and on the eve of a martyrdom witnessed by almost the entire population of Carthage.¹⁷ He delights to speak of the glory of the Christian particularly of the Christian priest, standing erect amid the ruins of the fallen world of paganism (*Ad Demet.* pp. 209, 211ff.: *De Mortal.* p. 223): lifting up holy hands on the mountain-top (pp. 5, 10, 11, 247):¹⁸ expecting nothing

14 Migne has a note on this, in the course of which he quotes St Augustine (*Ep. ad Valerianum*): *Legimus eis etiam librum beatissimi martyris Cypriani de Orat. Dom., et ostendimus quemadmodum docuerit omnia quae ad mores nostros pertinent, quibus recte vivamus, a Patre nostro qui in coelis est exposcenda, ne de libero praesumentes arbitrio a divina gratia decidamus.*

15 d'Alès: *La Théologie de Saint Cyprien* (Paris, 1922) says in effect that obviously Cyprian had Tertullian before him in penning this treatise, but that his (1) insistence on the social character of Christian prayer, (2) on the filial attitude of the child of God, (3) the necessity of Grace for sanctification, (4) the teaching on the twofold purpose of temptation, and finally (5) the insistence on daily Communion, are peculiar to Cyprian.

16 Donald Attwater in the new Alban Butler (Vol. IX, p. 204) quotes St Jerome's well-known anecdote: 'He particularly delighted in the writings of his countryman Tertullian, scarce passed a day without reading something in them, and when he wanted them used to say: "Reach hither my Master".'

17 Pontius describes a tumultuous crowd gathered about a large open space and people climbing trees in order to see his execution by beheading.

18 See Mgr. Freppel: *Saint Cyprien* IV leçon, p. 81 for a striking passage concerning that mountain which in a sense Cyprian never left. Bossuet was an admirer of the panoramic image and made use of it especially in his sermon '*Sur la loi de Dieu*'.

of earth¹⁹: ever conscious of living under the eyes of God and listening to his heavenly admonitions²⁰: instant in prayer (pp. 115, 195, and *Ep.* 26, 27, 175) and the offering of the Eucharistic Sacrifice (*Ep.* 63 and elsewhere)²¹: freed by his priesthood from every secular tie, every worldly care (*Ep.* p. 1, 2): fired with ardent longing for death (p. 218 ff.) Martyrdom (p. 300), Immortality (p. 230), the Imperishable Crown (p. 239 and *Ep.* 10, p. 23).²²

Disciplina and *Corona*: these are the operative words on every page of St Cyprian. While exhorting to the uphill climb (p. 128) along the narrow way (p. 223 and *Ep.* p. 32), it is to courage in a battle in which eternal life is once and for all lost or won (p. 215) by Christ's soldier (*miles Christi . . . non expavescit ad pugnam. Ep.* p. 150) that he would most of all persuade; his incessant pre-occupation is with the agonistic conception of human life²³ as an arena on which God and Christ and the Angels are looking down (*Deo et Christo spectante*), his most burning pages those in which, with all the imagery of the Roman amphitheatre and the athlete's race, he expands St Paul's great text in Corinthians IX. This is his moral atmosphere (and with him none but moral issues weigh one

19 See d'Alès, *op. cit.*, in which it is pointed that among all his prophetic visions (cf. following note) there was one thing of which St Cyprian never dreamt—a Christian Empire. He took the text 'My kingdom is not of this world' with entire literalness, his outlook on his own age was frankly pessimistic, his whole purpose to turn souls towards their eternal destiny.

20 In many passages throughout his writings St Cyprian makes it seem quite natural that he should learn of God in dreams and visions, taking them for granted in himself and others with Scriptural simplicity and referring those who think *somnia ridicula et visiones ineptas* to the case of Joseph (*Ep.* 66, p. 207). See also Hartel 520, 6:309, 2:497, 10:498, 9, 19:582:651:734 and *Vita* 12 and 13.

21 On St Cyprian and the Eucharist read especially *Ep.* 63, pp. 81 ff. and see d'Alès, *op. cit.* p. 270: *Les textes eucharistiques de C. abondent en indications concrètes riches de sens et de doctrine*, and p. 249: *une doctrine non pas achevée mais cohérente*. On the morrow of his conversion he said to Donatus: *Penuria esse nulla jam poterit, cum semel pectus caelestis sagina saturaverit*; his allusions supply much valuable evidence to third-century Eucharistic practice, and while employing no technical term, not even the word Eucharist itself, his faith in the Real Presence is attested by the vivid expressions by which he refers to it: *Corpus Dni, Sctum Dni. Corpus, Corpus Xsti, Caro Xsti, Sctum Dni, Cibus Xsti, Cibus caelesti, Panis coelestis*, etc.

22 'In peace He will give to the conquerors a white crown, according to our works, in persecution a purple crown once and again of our passion' (p. 249). 'Let them win a crown either white with good works or purple with suffering. In the heavenly army both peace and war have their garlands wherewith the soldier of Christ may be crowned for victory' (*Ep.* p. 23). Migne supplies in a footnote the following from St Jerome: *Non solum enim effusio sanguinis in confessione reputatur, sed devotae quoque mentis servitus immaculata quotidianum martyrium est. Illa corona de rosis et violis plectitur, ista de liliis* (Hieron. in *Epitaphio Paulae ad Eustochium*).

23 See d'Alès, *op. cit.* pp. 368-369.

jot), these are the thoughts with which he urges his flock to courage and perseverance, whether wilting under threat of persecution (p. 153 ff.), scared by plague (p. 216 ff.) or preparing for a violent death (p. 278 ff.) and transit into the immediate presence of the Lord, who, himself crowned with thorns will crown his martyrs with eternal flowers (p. 254).

In strong contrast to Tertullian and Augustine, and unlike the Fathers generally, Cyprian never sets out to propound a thesis and then seek support for it from Scripture.²⁴ In fact he employs quite the contrary method. Sacrificing all secular reading at his conversion in favour of 'the Bible and the Bible only', he makes its texts his starting-point and the *raison d'être* of all the rest, placing them at the beginning instead of at the end of his argument, after which he paraphrases the passages cited in his rhythmical Ciceronian periods²⁵ (so oddly different from any Biblical language), accepting their literal meaning with a straightforwardness that rarely allows him to expatiate in an allegorical sense.²⁶ Certain of his treatises, notably the lengthy *Testimonies against the Jews* and *To Fortunatus*, are scarcely more than collections of Scripture texts on given themes: he believes that the divine precepts 'must be handed like arms to the combatants' (p. 280) and that no raiment he could fashion for their spirits would suit them like that which each will make for himself from 'the very wool and purple of the Lamb' (p. 279).

Even a cursory survey of St Cyprian opens 'magic casements' for the student in many directions. It would be profitable²⁷ to trace his influence on Western theology through the ages: the terms he uses and the terms he does not use, either because they were as yet unknown, like *Incarnatio* or *Absolutio*, or objectionable as calling up pagan associations, deserve close attention. His popular cult has a

²⁴ Cf. Paul Monceaux: *Saint Cyprien* (third edition, 1927), especially chapters IV and V.

²⁵ See E. W. Watson: *op. cit.*, in which Cyprian's 'highly-coloured rhetoric', his invariable use of two words in preference to one, his 'extraordinary abundance of adjectives', his alliterations, rhymes, rhythmical endings to periods, etc., meet with full if not favourable analysis. Ch. I concludes with the following cogent remark: 'It is recognised now that the older scholars were wrong in classing together all the Christian authors as writers of ecclesiastical Latin. No such Latin existed till the monasteries were established and the great Fathers had written. And there is no author to whose style the term can be less appropriately applied than Cyprian'.

²⁶ The exception proving the rule is his quaint application of Noah's drunkenness to the Eucharist (*Ep.* p. 183).

²⁷ 'L'empreinte mise par Cyprien sur la théologie occidentale, est si profonde qu'un volume ne serait pas trop pour la dégager' (d'Alès, *op. cit.* p. xii).

charm of its own; the sailors on the North African coast still invoke their great martyr and refer to the equinoctial gales in autumn as *Cypriana* because they blow about the anniversary of his martyrdom, September 14.²⁸ A more abstruse question concerns his inclusion in the select company of saints who are mentioned in the Canon of the Mass: his name occurs in the oldest lists at the *Communicantes*²⁹. For Benedictines it is naturally of special interest to recognise in Cyprian an important source of the Holy Rule. Besides the textual parallels,³⁰ such as *Dilectione Dei et Christi nihil praeponendum* (*Testimonies* 111, 18) and notwithstanding the obvious contrast between the man of action with his African effusiveness³¹ and St Benedict's Roman and contemplative sobriety, one feels they breathed the same air, ruled with the same exquisite blend of clemency and firmness (see especially *Ep.* 54 on the Tares and *Ep.* 55 on Pity for the Lapsed) and join hands particularly in the perfection of their sincerity. 'The holy man cannot possibly have taught otherwise than he lived'³² is very close to what St Augustine says in his panegyric of Cyprian³³: 'he taught in life what he did, and did in death what he taught'.

These and many other subjects would repay detailed development,³⁴ yet it is as a Christian moralist first and foremost that St Cyprian has a message for the distracted world of today. Never surely in the centuries between his life and ours, has there been a time when better application could be made of his great teaching on Death (p. 216 ff.) for instance, or concerning 'The Goodness of Patience' (p. 250 ff.): God's patience, our Blessed Lord's patience, the patience of his martyrs, and, last of all, the patience he looks for in us *donec veniat* as we 'offer to his coming an obedience full of waiting thoughts' (p. 265).

²⁸ See Monceaux, *op. cit.*

²⁹ See V. L. Kennedy: *The Saints of the Canon of the Mass* (Rome, 1938).

³⁰ Consult Butler's *Scti Benedicti Monasterium Regula* (Herder, 2nd ed. 1927).

³¹ Watson (*op. cit.*) considers the piling up of synonyms an African trait. (Yet Tertullian is most concise). Sometimes in reading Cyprian one is reminded of later spiritual writers whose redundancy, notably in the case of Barbauson and Fr Baker, is only rendered tolerable by skilful abridgment.

³² St Gregory. *Dialogues*. Bk. 2, Ch. 38

³³ See St Aug. Sermon. 312. *In Nat. Cypr. M.*

³⁴ Protestant controversy has made and kept Cyprian's relations with the Holy See and his position on the Baptism of Heretics the most prominent subjects remembered about him. Their total omission from this short sketch may perhaps be excused by the following quotation from the treatise: *De Catholicae Ecclesiae Unitate: Quae si quis consideret et examinet, tractatu longe atque argumentis opus non est. Probatio est ad fidem facilis compendio veritatis . . . tu es Petrus et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam* (Hartel I, 212).

THE LITTLE SISTERS OF JESUS

BY

DORIS BURTON



FATHER DE FOUCAULD, the modern Desert Father, has a world-wide renown and considerable interest has been shown in his Fraternities, the Little Brothers of Jesus, which have sprung, as it were, from his very life-blood. But less is heard of the Little Sisters of Jesus, who are in many ways quite different from the usual type of religious Congregation. They lead a contemplative life and yet it is lived not inside an enclosure but outside, amongst the materialistic workers of France as well as the nomadic Infidels of the Sahara. It is a life of poverty, labour and love; its purpose is to imitate as closely as possible that of Jesus the Carpenter in his workshop. Jesus the Lover of mankind who, in his public ministry, shared the life of the common people, his heart and soul overflowing with love for God and man.

Thus the desire of the Little Sisters is to live among the poor in such a way as to be identified with the poor. And their poverty is authentic for they have no secure background of dowry, income or organised charity; their Fraternities are maintained by the work of their hands. In factory, workshop and field they share with their fellows the hardships and uncertainties of their lot; but they do so in a spirit of joy and pride as they realise in their own lives how Jesus Christ toiled for his daily bread. And, as workers among workers, they are always seeking by sympathy, understanding and friendship to manifest to all his unique love for them.

This life of loving service differs completely from mere humanitarian work of that of secular Catholic Action, for the Little Sisters are a Contemplative Order. To many, this fusing of two such contrary aspects of the Religious life may seem practically impossible. In order to explain how its achievement has been gradually evolved we must go back to the beginning, to October 1936, when the first two Little Sisters left their homes in France, inspired by the longing to follow in the footsteps of Father de Foucauld by living a self-sacrificial life of charity amid the nomadic tribes of the Sahara. Installed in a tent at Boghari they soon found their time fully occupied in good works; dispensing, visiting, helping in soup kitchens, nursing in hospital and catechising the Europeans. But they remained unsatisfied, for such a life lacked the spiritual source

of contemplation prescribed by Father de Foucauld. The idea of a religious foundation gradually took root in their minds, and in June 1938, with this in view, they set off on a pilgrimage to pray for guidance at his tomb at El-Golea.

Here they met Monseigneur Nouet, the Prefect Apostolic of the Sahara, and also Father Voillaume, the Founder of the Little Brothers of Jesus. They told these two men of their great longing to live and work amongst the poor nomadic Mussulmen of the desert. As a result of this meeting the work at Boghari was taken over by a Religious Congregation, whilst the two Little Sisters received a year's training in the Novitiate of the White Sisters at Birmandreis. On 8 September 1939, as Professed Religious, they had the joy of knowing that their dream of a new Order, the Little Sisters of Jesus (of Father de Foucauld), was now an established fact. An outsider might well have been forgiven for regarding this as a somewhat temerarious experiment which would prove short-lived, especially as it coincided with the outbreak of war. Nothing daunted by this event, however, the two Little Sisters set off on a voyage of exploration to determine the site of their first mission. Their final choice was that of Sidi-Boudjnan—a tent amid the nomadic tents of the Sahara—where they lived until 1940. In that year, having worked out the details of their Constitutions, they returned to Lyon-Sainte-Foy; and in 1941 they opened their first Novitiate at Tabet, in Aix, directed by the Dominicans of les Tourelles. Later, when the conditions of war enforced a hasty evacuation, the novices were given hospitality at Rosarie by the nuns of the Sacred Heart and by the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary.

As the movement of the allied troops prevented the return of the Saharan Sisters to North Africa, they devoted the time from 1942-1944 to studying arabic at Paris, a course of action which was made possible through the kindness of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary at Lyons, where they established their Centre. After the liberation of Marseilles they returned again to the Sahara. This time they took with them the papal approval of their Constitutions, granted them by the Holy Father at a private audience shortly before.

In April of the following year, 1946, they set out for Tunis to organise a house of studies in arabic for their novices destined for Islam. For their Novitiate had been made possible—whilst awaiting one of their own—by the hospitality of the Sisters of Notre Dame. Four months later their first Fraternity of Workers was founded

at Aix in France and, in the same year, a Fraternity of Probation for ten Little Sisters at El-Abiodh-Sidi-Cheikh near the Little Brothers of Jesus, the Fraternity at Sidi-Boudjnan being temporarily abandoned.

Certain changes occurred in 1947. A new Fraternity of Administration started at Marseilles, the Novitiate was transferred from Tubet (Aix) to a house to be shared with the nuns of the Blessed Sacrament at Notre-Dame de la Seds (Aix), leaving Tubet still as the Mother House, the Fraternity of the Postulate, the Fraternity of Adoration, a place of welcome for all who are drawn by the light of Father de Foucauld.

Thus, under the protection of divine Providence, in spite of the tremendous difficulties caused by a world war, the Little Sisters of Jesus have been established as a Religious Order on the lines laid down by Father de Foucauld; a hidden contemplative life of prayer and praise in a Fraternity of Adoration, its centre being our Lord himself in the Blessed Sacrament—yet a life lived out amongst toiling humanity in poverty, humility, labour and brotherly love, as was that of their Lord and Master.

Like our Lord, the Little Sisters desire nothing which will make their lot different from that of the worker and native, nothing which will prevent them from being like them—really and truly poor. For this reason they desire their Fraternities to be self-supporting, the Missionary Fraternities and those of Adoration to be adopted and sustained by the Worker Fraternities. In addition this characteristic of absolute poverty must be manifested by their mode of living wherever that may be. Their fare is of the simplest, omitting at all times meat, wine and coffee; their dwellings, their method of travel, their clothing, all must be identified with those of the poorest amongst whom they live. Thus the blue blouse and shawl of the French worker are worn in the Worker Fraternities of France, the white dress and black cloak of the Arabian women in the Sahara. The only distinguishing mark of the Little Sisters is their emblem, a heart surmounted by a cross, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the symbol of their Apostolate which is offered up in Immolation for the whole world, and for the Redemption of Islam in particular.

For amid their hard and absorbing labour in the factory or on the land, as also in their nomadic life of service among the pagans of the desert, the main purpose of the Little Sisters is that of the direct apostolate through the silent and hidden radiation of the interior riches of their contemplative life out into that exterior one of work, poverty and love. This would seem to be a new form

of contemplative life, purposing in a close identification with the people not only to provide an outpouring of Christ-life but also to find a support for such a life in intimate union with Jesus. The keynote of this identification is love, the desire to be united in the deepest friendship with all, to be all things to all men. But to remain true to this high ideal amid the materialistic evils that surround them, the Little Sisters must safeguard that authentic life of a Religious, in which are preserved the necessary spiritual powers in all their traditional wisdom, by submission to the hierarchy of the Church and to the rules of the Holy See.

As in Europe so in Northern Africa. Although their apostolate seeks to elevate the inhabitants unobtrusively on both the material and the spiritual plane, yet it is an apostolate of love containing no hint of benevolent patronage. The Sisters offer friendship to the poor native pagans, and they desire, quite simply, to become one with them. This can only be brought about by living in their midst, visiting them, accepting their hospitality, sharing their meals, nursing their sick. In order to deepen this contact the Little Sisters strive to eliminate the differences between themselves and the Mussulman poor. They give up their European dress and customs, their native tongue. In their endeavour to become truly absorbed in their primitive surroundings they adopt—except for prayer—the local language, the local ways and methods, all that is not, in fact, incompatible with the Christian and Religious life which must be carefully preserved.

There is no doubt that this is a difficult task which will require years of adaptability, but it is a task which must also be preceded by a thorough study of the language, customs and traditions of the field of the apostolate, as also of its religion, in a spirit of respect for all truth contained in such worship insofar as it may lead to a real desire to know, love and serve God.

It may be thought that this ideal is too high, that a contemplative life lived amid the bustle of the world, in the midst of its lusts and temptations, is not only a dangerous experiment but too formidable for achievement. Yet who can say it is an unattainable ideal since Jesus of Nazareth leads the way! A special vocation carries with it not only the risks and the difficulties of that state but the grace to overcome them. Moreover this vocation is gradually built up by a long period of religious training lasting six or seven years. In addition, as professed religious, when they are exhausted by their labours and constant contact with men, they return to the Central Fraternities of Adoration to refresh themselves anew in the light of the Blessed Sacrament—like Mary of Bethany at the

feet of Jesus—that they may give themselves more abundantly to their fellow creatures. In the vastnesses of the desert surrounded by the problems and perils of the Mohammedan world, no less than amid those of the modern materialism of Europe, it may be truly said that he who has called his Little Sisters will be ever present with them. Jesus of Nazareth leads the way.

A DOMINICAN RETREAT HOUSE IN SWITZERLAND

BY

H. C. GRAEF



SWITZERLAND, these days, is to most of us the promised land of material enjoyments, the land flowing with milk and honey, where the Englishman, tired of the never-ending austerity diet, can for a few holiday weeks eat butter and cheese and cake and cream to his heart's content. But if he should not be only materially-minded he can also find spiritual enjoyments which perhaps he did not expect.

On the beautiful Lac de Neuchâtel of the fascinating, ever-changing play of colours, there stands the lovely old town Estavayer-le-Lac. It is a medieval place, with a thick wall and a castle, uneven, narrow streets, with a fine old parish church in the baroque style so frequent in Switzerland, and a convent of Dominican contemplative nuns which can boast of six hundred years of unbroken existence. Six hundred years of Mass, of liturgical chant—and these nuns chant beautifully—of contemplation—this means an atmosphere impregnated with the prayer and with the peace of the life of Mary.

Quite near this Convent a Dominican Retreat House was opened in 1943, in the middle of the war, and flourished at once. It is beautifully situated, many of its large, airy rooms overlook the Lake. It is run by a very charming and experienced Dominican Tertiary who receives guests for private as well as for preached Retreats; the ideal is, perhaps, to combine the two—to have a few days in private before by way of preparation, or afterwards to ruminate on what has been heard.

The Retreats are normally preached by Dominican Fathers, and

the Directrice is usually fortunate enough to secure some of the best-known Fathers of the French Province. There are ordinarily only two addresses a day—an excellent arrangement, as it is not only less of a strain for the priest, but also gives sufficient time to the retreatants for their prayer—an activity so often sadly curtailed in Retreats with four or even five Conferences a day. At Estavayer there is ample time for prayer and reading, whether in the lovely little chapel in which the Blessed Sacrament is reserved during Retreats, in one's room, in the 'salon' which contains a very good theological and mystical library, or in the garden which, however is small—though it makes up for its lack of size by the beautiful view over the lake.

A special feature of the preached Retreats is the '*Cercle*' in the afternoon, a kind of study circle, when the preacher answers written questions of general interest which have been deposited by retreatants in a box during the morning. At night one goes to Compline at the Convent.

Apart from Retreats that may be attended by anyone, there are those of groups, such as Catholic Action, nurses, young couples, who bring with them their own chaplain who arranges his Retreat on his own lines, though within the framework of the rules of the house. Last autumn there was made a new venture, viz. a short Retreat for non-Catholics with a view to giving them an adequate idea of the Catholic religion in Catholic surroundings.

Though this House is quite a new venture, everything runs smoothly and without fuss, and it has already developed a character of its own. There is a typically Dominican atmosphere of freedom and ease about it, which goes with a discipline that is in no way irksome. To give an example: though strict silence reigns throughout the day, there is a 'recreation' after lunch, when talking is allowed for those who wish to take advantage of it. The Conferences are, of course, in French, but for anyone accustomed to reading French spiritual books it will not be difficult to follow them. It is the ambition of the foundress, already partly realised, to make her house a centre of international spiritual contacts, and perhaps many English Catholics—and Christians of other denominations, too—might find it desirable to exchange for a few days the international atmosphere of the big Swiss hotels for the supra-national and supernatural charity that permeates this humble Retreatouse.¹

¹ The Directrice of the Maison de Retraites, Estavayer-le-Lac (Fribourg), Switzerland, will be happy to answer any enquiries; it is advisable to make arrangements as early as possible, because the holiday months July to September are getting booked up very quickly.

REVIEWS

EZECHIEL. By Paul Auvray (in the series *Témoins de Dieu*, No. 10). (Editions du Cerf; Blackfriars.)

This small book must undoubtedly be put down as one of the most exciting of recent appearances. Père Auvray, an Oratorian, has made a special study of Ezechiel, and has made an important and original contribution to the rather scanty literature on this prophet. He here enunciates a new theory about the origin, background and literary composition of the book, which sheds remarkable light on this obscure book. The outline of the same theory is not to be found elsewhere, except in the commentary of Bertholet of 1936, as is explained in the bibliographical note.

To most of us the Book of Ezechiel has hitherto been a series of somewhat disconnected apocalyptic visions and strange dramatic enactments believed to have occurred during the Babylonian exile. It is supposed that he went to Babylon with the first displaced persons under Joachin in 597 (IV Kings 24, 12), beginning his prophecies by the river Chobar in 592 (Ez. 1, 1-3).

Now the key to the new theory is that many of the prophecies are much more intelligible and the enactments easy to imagine if they are understood to have taken place in Palestine, and that the Palestinian prophecies form a first part to the whole book. These prophecies are principally concerned with the doom of Jerusalem and include the characteristic mimes which convey this message in a very concrete manner. The Babylonian prophecies, which form the last part of the book, have a much wider international view (as is natural to an exile), abandon the mime method of preaching and include the apocalyptic visions. The turning-point is the series of prophecies on the nations in chapters 25 to 32.

Once one admits the possibility of a Judean Ministry of Ezechiel, and distinguishes the traits of the Judean and the Babylonian, it then appears that almost the entire tract of chapters 2 to 24 is to be referred to Palestine, while chapters 1 and 34 to 48 are Babylonian. Chapter 33 belongs to 586 (the Fall of Jerusalem) and 3.11, 14-16 should come after this (describing Ezechiel's own migration) and leading up to the vision of the four living creatures in ch. 1, which was the inauguration of the Babylonian ministry. After this the Babylonian ministry continues (with much apocalyptic) from ch. 34 to the end. The eating of the book in ch. 2, which accords so well with the mime style, is the first prophecy of all, inaugurating the Judean ministry, which continues (apart from the migration-verses in ch. 3) down to the section on the nations (ch. 25 to 32). Half way through the Judean period we find the enactment of migration, performed at night, in ch. 12. He does not go far: by next morning (v. 8) he has halted, presumably in a village near

the capital, where he stays during the years of the siege (588-586), until the big deportation of the latter year.

This arrangement involves in fact very few displacements of the text, though the principal one, of ch. 1. together with the migration-verses in ch. 3 being shifted to before ch. 34, attracts the reader's attention perhaps unduly.

The result is a very consistent impression of the prophet and his mission. It is good to know that P. Auvray has announced (on the last page of the present book) that he hopes to write a full-length commentary on Ezechiel, this being but a sketch of its contents. Such a commentary will fill an important lacuna in Catholic exegesis and one may hope that it will appear in the famous series *Etudes Bibliques* where it will rank with Condamin's Isaias and Jeremias and Van Hoonacker's Minor Prophets. It is also good to know that P. Auvray will be responsible for Ezechiel in the new French translation of the whole Bible which has just begun to appear.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

LE ROYAUME D'ISRAEL. By L. Cheminant (in the series *Témoins de Dieu*, No. 9). (Editions du Cerf; Blackfriars.)

The originality of this useful book lies in its presentation of the religious and political history of the Northern Kingdom (Israel or Samaria), from the schism of 933-2 until the deportation in 722, exclusively from the point of view of the Northern Kingdom itself. When we read the history of these 210 years in the Bible (from III Kings 12 to IV Kings 17—involving 28 chapters) we are all the time being given the parallel history of Juda at the same time. The kings are dated by the reigns in the other kingdom, and the fact that contemporary rulers in the two kingdoms on two occasions happen to have the same name (Joram in 847 and Joas in 805), that the name Ochozias occurs in both lists (though not contemporary), and that some other names are perilously similar, only adds to the confused knowledge of this history that exists in the minds of many of us. Furthermore, of the 28 chapters in question, no less than 10 are taken up with anecdotes from the lives of the prophets Elias and Eliseus, which are very familiar to us as anecdotes, but are rarely understood upon their historical background or viewed in the light of their political importance.

M. Cheminant, who is a seminary professor at Rennes, has in this book disentangled all this for us. The story is vividly and carefully told and makes fascinating reading. The character and ideals of the various rulers are studied and the forceful action of the two great prophets Elias and Eliseus receives due emphasis. It should further be remembered that the two earliest of the writing prophets, Amos and Osee also belonged to the Northern Kingdom, and that although Juda remained faithful all the time to the dynasty of David, no outstanding prophet appeared in her midst after the

schism until the advent of Isaias and Micheas during the last years of the Northern Kingdom, from the collapse of which they were able to draw such powerful lessons for their own people.

This book has already been found by the present writer to be most valuable for the preparation of classes on this period of Old Testament history.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

THE LITERATURE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. By G. F. Moore, revised by L. H. Brockington. (Cumberlege; Oxford University Press; 5s.)

This recent addition to the Home University series is a revision of a work first published in 1913. It treats the Old Testament writings from the point of view of their literary history and the development of their religious ideas rather than from that of the political history of Israel. Its aim is to present the results of the critical literary study of the Old Testament to the ordinary educated reader; and from the standpoint of the independent critic it has done so with great success. After introductory chapters on the Canon and on the Old Testament as a national literature, the Pentateuch is treated rather fully, as its importance deserves. Its main sources are dated from the ninth century (J) to the Persian period (P); the terms 'myth' and 'legend' are freely used of the older narratives; miracle is explained away. The other books or groups of books have each a chapter. To the Prophets there is a short general introduction. The whole of Daniel is assigned to the second century. (It is a pity the printers have misplaced a line on page 167). Jonah is put with Esther and Ruth among the 'Story Books'. The Wisdom Writers also have a special introduction by the reviser of this edition. There is a rather limited bibliography and a sufficient index. Since the book is clearly written and most readable, it is likely to be widely read by the ordinary public; and its conclusions and still more its assumptions, will probably be accepted as those of Biblical literary criticism in general. Although, in an early chapter, Church authority, the consent of tradition and the witness of the New Testament to the Old are mentioned as of weight with many Christians, yet in the body of the book these factors are ignored. To Catholics, therefore, many of its conclusions will be suspect, as neglecting essential elements in the Biblical problem. But this work is no doubt representative of the bulk of more or less popular writing on the Holy Scriptures in English. Catholic writers have still the task of capturing popular opinion in this as in other fields; there is no need for them to let the case for their own more traditional but equally critical presentation go by default.

DOM J. HIGGENS.

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE. By Edgar J. Goodspeed. (Cumberlege, Oxford University Press; 7s. 6d.)

This book was published in America in 1946 and the author is

chiefly known for his important part in the new translation published in 1938 as *The Complete Bible: an American Translation*. He was also on the committee which produced the Revised Standard Version for the Protestant Churches of America in 1946.

Professor Goodspeed has in mind the inquirer who wants to read the Bible, but, daunted by the volume's bulk and the variety of its contents, does not know 'where to begin' (the title of the first chapter). First of all, he says, 'the Bible is not a book but a library. And how do you read a library? Certainly not by taking the catalogue and reading the first book listed in it, then the second, and so on. Nor do you read it shelf by shelf, beginning at the upper left hand corner. You follow some definite interest of yours, or you decide upon some principle to guide your reading'. The present book is intended as a guide of this kind. Very sensibly he suggests beginning with the Gospel of St Mark: 'if we ask How is the Gospel of Mark to be read? the answer is At one sitting, as any close-packed, swiftly moving story should be read. It can easily be read aloud in an hour and a half, and to yourself in half that time' (p. 3). Then immediately he proposes the reading of the other Gospels, for a knowledge of the Gospels gives us the high point of view from which we must read the rest of the Bible (p. 8), and thus we shall 'make friends with the prophets and apostles who so largely wrote it, and above all with its last great Hero, who invited us to be his friends' (Preface).

From here he guides the reader to the various kinds of literature in the Bible, beginning with biography (indicating the biographical sections in the prophets, for instance). There follows a section on eloquence, which includes Hebrews, 'the most finished and conscious eloquence in the New Testament' (p. 33). Then he proceeds to history, and to the special department of history which is law. The various types of poetry in the Bible are treated admirably, and the book ends with chapters on the letters, revelations and devotional literature of the Bible.

Some of the chronology is a little distasteful to us, e.g. the Pentateuch 400 B.C., Psalms 150 B.C., Synoptics 70-90 A.D., Ephesians 90, Pastorals 150, and Baruch c. 100 A.D. But these dates are quite irrelevant to the thesis of the book and in no way disturb it. There is a sound piety throughout, although Christ's divinity is nowhere asserted or evidently presupposed, though he is seen as the Saviour of the world (p. 18) and 'the embodiment of the highest Wisdom of God and at the same time the guide and helper of the individual human spirit' (p. 8). These are vague terms which although they cause no offence, leave so much unsaid. The chapter on English Bibles traces the history very accurately and includes the little-known eighteenth century efforts of Whiston and Wesley as well as the various modern speech versions. Rheims, Challoner and its 1941 (American) Revision are included, but a

sad lacuna is the absence of reference to Mgr Knox, whose final text may not yet have been published at the time of writing, although this should have been made good for the English edition.

Undoubtedly the most valuable feature of this book is the classification of Old Testament literature, extracts being given in the Professor's own version.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

JESUS—HISTOIRE ET CRITIQUE. By F.-M. Braun, O.P. (Casterman).
SAGESSE GRECQUE ET PARADOXE CHRETIEN—Témoignages Littéraires.

By Charles Moeller. (Casterman; 90 francs.)

Père Braun's book is a collection of studies dealing with the chief aspects of our Lord's person and message and having particular reference to the findings of modern scholarship, both Catholic and non-Catholic. The author displays wide knowledge of the relevant literature and succeeds in compressing a vast amount of reliable information into some two hundred and fifty pages. Much of the work was originally written, so the author tells us in his preface, as an article for a volume entitled *l'Histoire Générale des Religions* which no doubt accounts for its somewhat schematic character; it may well be that too much has been attempted in too small a space. But if we are invited to survey the surface rather than gaze into the depths, Père Braun off-sets these possibly inevitable limitations by his well-documented text and sufficient bibliography; though the student would have been helped yet further had the book been provided with an index of scripture references and authors' names. Following an opening chapter on the Sources come fourteen others, each serving to elaborate the main theme. Together they fulfil the author's promise of giving to 'the reader in search of precise and fundamental notions what he is entitled to expect from lives of the Saviour, from commentaries on the Gospel, and critical studies concerning Christian origins'. The whole is a notable piece of work by the Professor of Holy Scripture at the University of Fribourg.

Christianity, Dr Moeller would appear to hold, is indissolubly wedded to Hellenism, at least in so far as this embodies the highest form of a merely natural humanism. The 'scandal' of the Cross remains, yet through the influence of divine grace all the glory that was Greece is to be found again, deepened and enriched, in the artists and poets of the Christian era. The age-old problems, evil, suffering and death, are in truth only explicable in the light of Calvary, and of this the Christian writers show at least an implicit awareness. Dr Moeller is a theologian and scholar of distinction, as is evident from the clearness of his expository method and his comprehensive reading, here tabulated in a useful bibliography; his literary manner, a blending of the hortatory and the rhapsodic, is

impressive in its earnestness, though it cannot entirely hide, here and there, traces of subjectivity and special pleading. Homer, Aeschylus and Euripides among the Greeks, Virgil and Dante on the life hereafter, Shakespeare, Racine and Dostoevsky, whose work reveals the 'climat chrétien' in which it was produced, are quoted extensively and with effect. A French critic on Shakespeare is always interesting, especially when, as here, he shows both knowledge and discernment; but Dr Moeller's conception of the character of Hamlet, 'ce jeune idéaliste', is too nicely adjusted to the lines of his thesis to be wholly convincing. Shakespeare, least of all poets, lends himself to *a priori* treatment. The book's underlying argument, however, remains unimpaired; we are led safely to the conclusion, hardly to be refuted, that it is only in the '*humanisme céleste*' of St Francis of Assisi and ultimately of the Gospel that evil, suffering and death find their solution.

ÆLFRED GRAHAM

THE NEW TESTAMENT DOCTRINE OF THE 'LAST THINGS'. By H. A. Guy, B.A., B.D. (Cumberlege, Oxford University Press; 10s. 6d.)

Eschatology is a subject which is at the present time receiving special prominence in biblical theology. This book includes a careful sifting of the eschatological teaching in the New Testament by an Anglican schoolmaster. The tracing of the various texts is in itself a valuable work, involving much patient research. At the outset the author distinguishes two aspects of the 'Last Things': on the one hand there is the 'personal' aspect (what will happen to me after death?) and then there is the 'cosmic' aspect (what will happen at the end of the world?). The second chapter consists of a review of Jewish and Old Testament notions on the subject. The author then launches out on to the Gospel teaching. Here at once we find (as we cannot but expect) the argument to be frequently vitiated by much speculation about the reliability of the Gospels themselves (with acceptance of Mk and Q as sources for Mt and Lk), and by speculations (which to us Catholics seem so idle) about the possibility of our Lord's false expectations (p. 57), ignorance or error (p. 84), or that 'the thought of Jesus underwent development at different stages of his ministry' (p. 80). Chapter IV analyses and criticises the three main views on eschatology at the present day (and it is useful to have these laid out so clearly): (a) Schweitzer's 'thoroughgoing eschatology', according to which Jesus expected the immediate advent of the Kingdom and was disappointed, (b) the traditional identification of the Kingdom with the Church, and (c) the 'realised eschatology' (the Kingdom of God is within you) usually associated with the name of C. H. Dodd. The author inclines to the third view, rejecting the two others. Lastly in this connection is recorded the view that the eschatological

teaching of the Gospels is the result of interpolations. From Chapter V a similar study is made of the Acts and the Apostolic writings. Again argument is vitiated by mistrust of sources: it is, for instance, taken for granted that the Pastorals are not Pauline, nor the Apocalypse Joannine. Further, the apocalyptic passages in Thess., Jude and II Peter (like that in Mk 13), are merely incorporations of existing Jewish apocalyptic material (p. 140). It is also supposed (p. 105 sq.) that St Paul fully expected the Parousia soon. The view of Dodd (p. 127) that a 'realised eschatology', according to which the Last Things are realised in the Messianic Age, is to be found also in St Paul, is discussed. In short, there is much that is valuable in this book, both in the study of the New Testament and in the presentation of various interpretations current among non-Catholics, and these the Catholic reader will find interesting, though he will not wish to pause over much of the unorthodox speculations.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

THE NEW TESTAMENT DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM. By W. F. Flemington. (S.P.C.K.; 10s. 6d.)

At the beginning of the preface the author writes: 'It has become increasingly clear that baptismal practice is confused because baptismal theology is indefinite. There is need for a more thorough study of the biblical, patristic and liturgical evidence which must form the foundation for a more adequate theology of Christian baptism'. He would hardly have spoken of baptismal theology as confused if he had been familiar with the large treatises in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* or in many of the manuals of theology. The author is, however, a Methodist, and there is no small difficulty about the interpretation of Wesley's own teaching about Infant Baptism (p. 140). The object of this book, carried out in a most scholarly way, is to investigate all the evidence dealing with the sacrament of Baptism in the New Testament. A certain amount of time is, from the Catholic reader's point of view, wasted in ch. III in speculations about the reliability of Gospel evidence and the historicity of the facts therein related. Similarly ch. IV opens with an apology for accepting the evidence of the Book of Acts, and continues (p. 46) with the rebuttal of the view that Baptism was not universal among the primitive Christian communities. In spite, however, of many doubts carefully classified, the author finally (e.g. p. 109, 127) concludes in favour of the dominical authority behind the practice of Baptism.

The chief value of the book to the Catholic student is the examination of the New Testament text (even if he does not accept its treatment) and the registering of the many various interpretations. He will be helped in this by the good indices.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

THE CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE. By Julianus Pomerius. Translated and annotated by Sr Mary Josephine Suelzer, Ph.D. (Ancient Christian Writers Series; Newman Bookshop Westminster, Maryland; and Mercier Press, Cork.)

THE LORD'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT. By St Augustine. Trans. by Very Rev. John J. Jepson, S.S. Ph.D. (Introduction and Notes by the Editors. A.C.W. Series. Mercier Press, Cork; 15s.)

The series of *Ancient Christian Writers* keeps its high standard. The publication of an English text of Julian Pomerius's treatise is an enterprising addition. The book was written in Gaul in the second half of the 5th century by an exile from Africa, deeply influenced by St Augustine, and having an audience of clerics in mind. Priests especially will find much in it of value, though there are sections about action and contemplation (Bk. II), and about virtue and vice (Bk. III)—especially in the passages on pride and the passions—of wider interest. St Augustine's commentary on the Sermon on the Mount will be generally welcomed. It would perhaps be preferable if the editors gave, in works of St Augustine, a full translation of the relevant *Retractions* rather than summaries in the notes. The latter, and the introductions to both volumes, are as satisfactory as in previous volumes in the series. The introduction to *The Contemplative Life* gives as full an account of its author as is possible at present. Attention should be drawn to the fact that volumes in the series are now issued by the Mercier Press by agreement with the American publishers.

A. R.

THE MAN NEAREST TO CHRIST. By F. L. Filas, S.J. (Dobson; 12s.6d.)

This book is obviously the outcome of much painstaking and methodical work on the part of the author, an American Jesuit. In his first section he deals with the life and character of St Joseph as portrayed in the Gospels and the apocrypha. The information one gleans from the New Testament concerning St Joseph is sparse, and it was but natural that attempts should be made in the first centuries of Christianity to expand and develop the gospel story. But after an examination of the apocrypha (Fr Filas gives extensive quotations), one returns thankfully to the factual and sober account of the evangelists. The pious frauds of the apocrypha, the fantastic embellishment and absurd claim of miracles would make a Hollywood producer blush.

The early Church being much preoccupied with defending Trinitarian and Christological dogma, the devotion of Christians to St Joseph, whilst always existing, was not outstanding. Fr Filas in the second half of the volume outlines the growth of devotion to the foster father of Christ. Here we are given first an account of the development of the devotion up to 1550, and secondly from

the Council of Trent until the present day. Mention, of course, is duly made of the part the Society played in propagating the devotion. The book is rounded off by a number of papal documents (thoughtfully translated) relevant to St Joseph, by a comprehensive enumeration in chronological order of all papal documents from 1479, and by an accessible reference table and index. In this book Fr Filas makes a helpful contribution to the fuller appreciation of the foster father of our Lord. Data from many and different sources have been collated (on this score alone the book meets and fulfils a longfelt gap); altogether a highly acceptable account of devotion to St Joseph.

TERENCE NETHERWAY, O.P.

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP. By Dietrich Bonhoeffer. (S.C.M. Press; 9s.)

This book might be not unfairly described as an attempt to analyse the nature of the Christian life, in the light of certain essential texts in the Synoptic Gospels, and to seek the development in the Epistles of St Paul. It is significant that St John is left out of the account. The author, of whom an interesting Memoir is given at the beginning of the book, was executed at a Concentration Camp in Germany on 9 April 1945. He was one of a group of brave men who deemed it their duty to work for the defeat of their own country, who considered it less important that Germany should be defeated than that Christian civilisation should be destroyed. It was a terrible choice for a true patriot to make, but it was a choice entirely in harmony with the uncompromising Christianity displayed in these pages.

For a Catholic the main value of the work will lie in its genuine moral insight and its unmistakable sincerity. However remote such a distinction as that here made between 'cheap' and 'costly' grace may seem, from the methods of Catholic theology, we can recognise and accept the moral doctrine which arises out of it, even though our expression and our emphasis would be slightly different.

We are sorry however that this book should show so little understanding of the 'Catholic mind'. It is not true that the distinction between precept and counsel implies a 'double standard' *tout court*, and a small exercise of Christian patience is called for when we find Monasticism and a 'flight from the world' still being coupled together. Even more disturbing is the phrase 'The essence of Christian prayer is not the vague adoration of mysticism'. No doubt time would have eliminated these defects in a soul as sincere and truth-loving as Pastor Bonhoeffer; but time was denied him, and in his heroic death he has surely passed to the Vision in which all problems are resolved.

R. VELARDE

GOD AND MEN. By Herbert H. Farmer, D.D. (Nisbet; 10s. 6d.)

This is a series of lectures in Christian apologetics delivered by Dr Farmer in Yale University. He carries his great learning easily, and his fluent and readable style conceals a strenuousness of thought which becomes more impressive as the lectures advance. His theme is the inescapable personal involvement between man and man and between man and God, which produces tensions and problems which only the Christian life can solve where others try to ignore or at best to lay down a by-pass.

LUKE TURNER, O.P.

THE ANGEL WHO GUARDED THE TOYS. By Doris Burton. (Sands & Co. Ltd.; 7s. 6d.)

This is a book of stories for children between the ages of seven and thirteen. It fills a need. There are many children who specially enjoy definitely Catholic stories such as Miss Burton gives us in this book. At the present time these children are poorly catered for. Tales of adventure, of school life, fairy tales, etc., are published galore, but there are very few Catholic story books brought out now, such as we used to have from Cicely Hallack and others. Lives of saints for children are certainly well done, but Catholic stories about ordinary children are needed too. 'The Angel who guarded the Toys' is charmingly written in simple English, and is clearly printed. The illustrations by R. de Souza are as usual quite delightful.

FLORENS ROCH

CHRISTOPHER'S TALKS TO THE LITTLE ONES. By David L. Greenstock. (Burns Oates; n.p.)

This little book should prove a great help to young parents who feel diffident about teaching the first beginnings of the Faith to their little ones. The first chapters contain wise advice to parents and are followed by the simple explanation of all the essential doctrines. 'Christopher' understands what children understand!

S. M. F.

FIRST COMMUNION SOUVENIRS, and A CHRISTMAS PAINTING BOOK.
Both by Sister Mary Ansgar, O.P. (Bloomsbury Publishing Co.; 2s. 6d. each.)

It is a pity that in both these 'First Communion Souvenirs' and the Christmas Painting Book the Child Jesus is depicted as being quite characterless and doll-like. Children's imaginations need to be stimulated by something more vital, but doubtless they will enjoy colouring the painting book.

S. M. F.

EXTRACTS

HELP FOR RELIGIOUS SISTERS continues to be Père Plé's theme in the *Supplement de la Vie Spirituelle* No. 7 (November 1948). The lack of contact and co-ordination among the various Orders and Congregations has been, he says, a source of weakness which has been considerably diminished in the past few years. The article is in fact a summary of the various committees and organisations which have been set up in France to facilitate the mutual assistance of the various groups of Sisters throughout the country. There are unions of teaching sisters and of 'welfare' workers—including nursing sisters and those engaged in social work. There have also been numerous courses of study and retreats for superiors or for novice mistresses which have served to break down barriers of isolation which so easily and imperceptibly raise themselves round a body of men or women, particularly those engaged in religious occupations. Père Plé also cites the various publications which have helped in the same work of co-operation among religious and he concludes with a short account of the great work which goes on in London at 27 Claverton Street for assisting girls in finding their vocation in religious life. Evidently in the matter of co-operation among religious, the association of teaching sisters and the house at Claverton Street have both provided inspiration for Père Plé's work. In a few years this indefatigable and tactful work of the Editor of *La Vie Spirituelle* will be seen to have done more for the renewal of religious life in Europe than almost any other human activity. May God continue to bless and prosper it.

Another volume just arrived from the same source and following up *La Directoire* is devoted to the work of the Novice Mistress. *Pour Les Maitresses Des Novices* (6s. 6d. direct from *Blackfriars*) includes a dozen substantial essays on various aspects of the novitiate by men and women specially qualified to speak. A more detailed account of this volume will appear in a subsequent issue of LIFE OF THE SPIRIT.

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SPIRITUAL DIRECTION is the subject of the December catechetical instruction appearing in the Italian Carmelite review *Revista di Vita Spirituale*. The whole of this 'Little Catechism of the Spiritual Life' when completed will be most valuable and it is typical of the thorough and scientific work done by this review which at the same time retains a popular style:

1. *Who is a Spiritual Director?*

A Spiritual Director is the priest who undertakes the care of directing the soul in the life of perfection. . . .

3. *Is the Spiritual Director the principal guide of the soul?*

No. The soul's principal guide is the Holy Spirit, but it belongs to the Spiritual Director to help the soul to recognise

for certain the voice and impulse of the Spirit, for she, in her inexperience may confuse it with a natural impulse.

4. *Should the Spiritual Director be a single person?*

Obviously it is desirable that one and the same priest should direct the soul. . . . Nevertheless since the principal guide is the Holy Spirit, he can secure the soul as well by several successive human voices! . . .

5. *Does this 'unique' direction exclude the intervention of any other besides the Director?*

Most assuredly, No. . . .

And this balanced treatment goes on to specify more carefully the precise rôle of the Director and to insist on the only purpose of such spiritual education which is the speedy sanctification of the soul.

But people sometimes forget in speaking of Direction that the dispositions of the one who wishes to be directed are equally as important as those of the Director. A certain Sister Enrica, O.P., sets out bravely to consider this point in the other Italian spiritual review (*Vita Cristiana*, Nov.-Dec., 1948) from the point of view of feminine psychology.

Is a 'true' and efficacious spiritual director possible, she asks, for a woman who suffers from 'stupidity'? We believe not. By stupidity I do not mean a lack of intelligence, but that sort characteristic of feminine stupidity which comes above all from an absence of 'good sense' defined as 'reason applied to the immediate and practical things of life'.

Those who are blessed with good sense must further contribute an absolute sincerity, a level-headed discretion and a faithful perseverance; otherwise direction is useless. Suor Erica discusses these three characteristics, all of which are sufficiently difficult for many women.

The same number of *Vita Cristiana* has a useful article on *Formation in Chastity in Seminaries*, which the author, an Italian Dominican, treats in a positive manner and with conviction. Such subjects as these are often taken for granted. The Director will only be really successful if he has first proved himself a proficient 'directee' particularly in matters of such positive and dynamic value as that of chastity.

* * *

THE SACRAMENT OF THE SICK (could not this become the general English name instead of the misleading 'Last Sacraments?') is considered in two recent publications of the Editions du Cerf. The fifteenth issue of *Maison-Dieu* (3s. 6d.) reports the congress held at Vanves last April, when a group of priests met to consider the pastoral implications of the Sacrament. There are admirable papers on the psychology of sick people, on the 'integration of the sick in the life of the parish' and on illness in liturgical tradition, apart from

the more technical contributions on the administration and liturgy of the Sacrament. At a time when the State is assuming such ubiquitous responsibilities for the health of its citizens, the healing function of the Church grows more urgent. The Sacrament of the Sick, certainly the least known of all the sacraments in the immense richness of its forms and the profundity of the teaching it imparts, needs to be made popular, that is to say known by the people of God. To this end the Liturgical Album, *Le Sacrament des Malades* (1s. 0d.) is devoted. As usual in this superlative series, photographic illustrations supplement a vivid and practical text. Most useful is an analysis of the parts of the Sacrament (with the main parts in the vernacular), together with actual illustrations of the manual actions of the priest.

* * *

LA VIE SPIRITUELLE for December has an article by Mgr Garonne on reading the Psalms 'in the light of the Gospels', an excellent aid to mental prayer, and a study of 'the evangelical message of St Benedict Labre' by Dom Doyère. Of special interest is an account of the eremitical life in Carmelite tradition, written by a French Carmelite who is a member of the community of hermits established last year by the French and Belgian Provinces at Roquebrune.

BOOKS RECEIVED

- Browne and Nolan*. C. Lattey, S.J.: The Book of Daniel, 12s. 6d.
B.O.W. Catholic Diary, 1949; J. P. de Caussade, S.J.: Spiritual Letters, 6s.; J. O'Connell: The Rubrics of the Forty Hour Exposition, 3s. 6d.; Francis Trochu: The Curé D'Ars, 18s.
Clonmore and Reynolds. R. Butler, S.J.: The Words of the Mass, 7s. 6d.; John Carr, C.S.S.R.: Blessed Maria Goretti, 3s. 6d.
Gill (Dublin). Little Catechism of the Act of Oblation of St Thérèse, 1s.; Fr Canice, O.F.M.Cap.: Mary's Rosary, 3d.; Olive Mary Scanlon: The Barque of Peter, 5s.
Sands. Teresa Lloyd: Jesus Teaching, 8s. 6d.
Sheed and Ward. Catherine de Hueck: Dear Bishop, 6s.

LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

Contributors are encouraged to submit original MSS. or translations from the Fathers. *Literary Communications* should be addressed to The Editor, Life of the Spirit, Blackfriars, Oxford (Tel. 3607). The Editor cannot be responsible for the loss of MSS. submitted; and no MS. will be returned unless accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope.

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